Industrial Worker

JANUARY 1999 #1618, vol. 96 no. 1 $1.00/75 p EDUCATION ORGANIZATION EMANCIPATION

California TAs suspend strike

Teaching Assistants at eight University of California campuses returned to work Dec. 7, ending a week-long strike by thousands of graduate student employees.

The statewide strike was called the week before final exams, after a 15-year campaign that has included a series of rolling strikes throughout the U.C. system failed to force administrators to the bargaining table. While university officials continue to refuse to recognize the UAW-affiliated Association of Graduate Student Employees, they agreed to discuss workers' concerns in exchange for an agreement to suspend the strike for at least 45 days.

The union's 9,000 members provide 60 percent of undergraduate instruction.

"It's purely a question of power," said Ricardo Ochoa, president of AGSE/UAW Berkeley. "The administration right now has unfettered power to set our terms and conditions of employment and that's not something they want to give up."

While the strikers did not ask other UC unions to honor their picket lines (and none did), most faculty refused to replace strikers in classrooms and largely rebuffed administrators' directives to hire scabs.

Faculty members were vocal in criticizing administrators for failing to resolve the dispute. "It's important to emphasize that this is not a fight between the faculty and unionized graduate student employees," said UC Berkeley Professor of Political Science *Michael Rogin*. "The administration should not expect the faculty to mitigate the strike."

The UC Student Association also pledged support for the strike, calling upon administrators to recognize the union and condemning efforts to bring in scabs.

At the Santa Cruz campus, Wobblies worked with an ad hoc organization, Undergraduates for Unionization, to support the strike. At a Nov. 25 protest in front of the administration offices, FW Manuel Schwab blocked an administrator from seizing the mike, telling her they would be glad to let administrators talk about their concerns once they agreed to contract talks with the union.

FW Fhar Miess produced a song book (the Itty Bitty Red Song Book), containing a few Wobbly favorites, including "Dump the Bosses Off Your Back," changed into "Dump the Regents Off Your Back."

Dec. 3 was egg-timer day. A giant egg-

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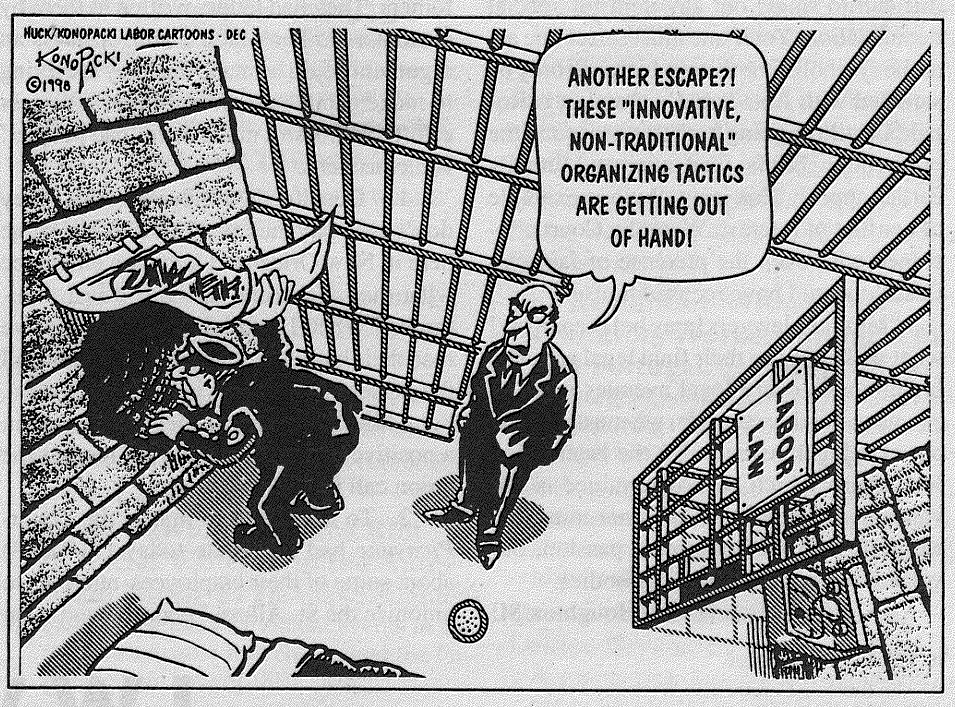
Solidarity closes Tacoma pier

Ship with cargo for Kaiser scabs idled by IWW picket

At approximately 6:00 a.m. December 7th, IWW members set up a picket line at Pier 7 in Tacoma, Washington, in support of the steel workers on strike at Kaiser Aluminum. The "Sea Diamond," a ship loaded with bauxite destined for the Tacoma and Spokane Kaiser Aluminum facilities, was delayed for 24 hours after members of Earth First! occupied a crane and a conveyor belt at the pier.

The action was called by members of the United Steel Workers of America who have been on strike for the last three months. Management at Kaiser Aluminum, owned by Charles Hurwitz of Maxxam corporation, has been determined to break the union with the used of scab labor and strike-breaking goons from the International Management Assistance Corporation (IMAC). The strike was prompted by Kaiser's refusal to talk to the union about downsizing and cuts in benefits and retirement, and Kaiser had begun to move trailers onto the polluted factory site to house scabs before negotiations were to begin.

In what the media termed an "odd alliance," members of the IWW and Earth First! worked in support of the steelworkers, and successfully shut down the pier for the day. The occupation was planned by EF! members from the West Coast, and the IWW picket was coordinated by Marine Transport Workers in Seattle and Oakland, Calif., and the Olympia IWW. A spokesperson for Kaiser was quoted in the *Tacoma Spokesman Review* as saying that the action confirmed "concerns that the union was working with an extremist organization." Port of Tacoma official were caught by total surprise at the action which took place right in front of their corporate offices. The steelworkers maintained their legal informational picket of six during the action.



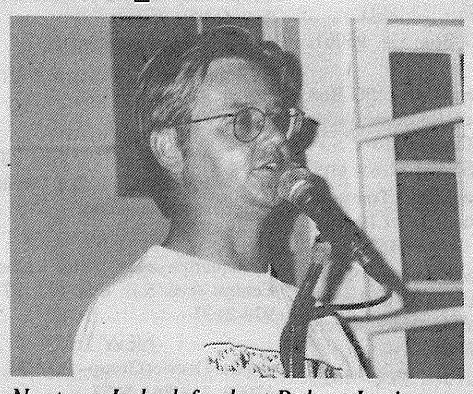
The first of the waterfront workers, members of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union, began arriving to work the ship at about 7:00 a.m. MTW organizer Jeremy Read explained to a crane operator the nature of the picket. Realizing his right not to endanger the health and safety of anyone on the job site, the crane operator left. Other longshore workers honored the action without hesitation, and many who had not been dispatched to the Sea Diamond came down both in support and curiosity. Many were surprised that Earth First! had acted in solidarity with union workers, as they had viewed their past actions as opposed to the interests of workers, particularly in the lumber industry. Other longshore workers grabbed "bulls" or forklifts and moved checker shacks around to the picket site for picketers to get out of the rain.

Earth First! members scouted Pier 7, and the first two were arrested attempting to occupy the crane. Fortunately, others had made it up to the crane's boom, and others were posted in the scaffolding of the conveyor belt to the silos, 150 feet above ground. When media arrived, the climbers attempted to unfurl a banner which read "Hurwitz Cuts Jobs Like He Cuts Trees." The wind ended up blowing the banner and the climbers about, creating a spectacle for the TV crews that were filming. These climbers were cited for criminal trespass, but were not hurt. The climbers in the crane descended in the afternoon, and were not cited or arrested.

The Sea Diamond dropped anchor at about 10:00 a.m., and water craft ranging from an IWW sailboat to personal water craft drifted around the port, preventing the

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Neptune Jade charges dropped



Neptune Jade defendant Robert Irminger addressing the 1998 IWW Assembly.

The Pacific Maritime Association, which represents global shipping and stevedore companies, has dropped all of its suits in the Neptune Jade dispute. The suits grew out of a September 1997 action on the Oakland docks in support of 500 fired Liverpool, England, dockers. Oakland dockworkers refused to cross a picket line set up by IWW members and other labor activists to unload the Neptune Jade's scab cargo.

When the ship sailed for Vancouver, Canada, and then Kobe and Yokohama, Japan, with its scab cargo still on board, dockworkers there also refused to unload the ship. Alarmed by deregulation and privatization schemes which have undermined unions around the world, waterfront workers are now recognizing the importance of coordinating labor support efforts internationally.

The PMA slapped a lawsuit seeking hundreds of thousands of dollars, against picketers and also sued the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, whose members honored the picket line. Initially named as defendants were ILWU members Jack Heyman, picket captain Robert Irminger, and the Labor Party (Golden Gate chapter). The PMA demanded that defendants "name names" and turn over union records and correspondence concerning picketers and organizers of the Neptune Jade action. In March, California Superior Court Judge Henry Needham, Jr. dismissed all but Irminger's case.

The PMA has now agreed to drop its suits against all Neptune Jade defendants.

"The Liverpool dockers may have lost their battle," ILWU activist Jack Heyman said, "but the class war against union-busting privatization and casualization of labor goes on. And the lesson that we have taken to heart from Liverpool's struggle is that by organizing internationally maritime workers can defend themselves against the attacks of the global shipowners. The Neptune Jade victory is a shining example of that."

Perhaps the most compelling incentive for PMA to drop the case was fear of walkouts along the West Coast with contract negotiations looming on the horizon. On the morning of July 22, angry longshoremen shutdown the Port of Oakland and rallied in

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Restaurant Wobs

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Readers' Soapbox

Mumia Abu-Jamal

There is a word for what the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, with its October 30 ruling, is attempting to do to Mumia Abu-Jamal: murder. Even were there any sense in talking about the legitimacy of legal procedures designed by the ruling class to serve its interests, the blatant legal errors which have infected every stage of trial and appeal reveal this word, legitimacy, as nothing but the hollowest of shells.

It is necessary to respond to such a devastating catalog of outrages that it is difficult to single out any item for special denunciation. Yet if one must select one act as the symbol of the thirst which will only be satisfied with Abu-Jamal's blood, it is Ronald Castillo signing both this order and the prosecution briefs filed against Mumia's earlier appeal. This is an obvious example of conflict of interest. Were the Court concerned with even the pretense of fairness, Castillo would have recused himself.

"Mumia's lawyers [may be] prepar[ing] what will likely be their final legal appeal," but although every legal avenues must be exhausted in this struggle, we must not rule out extralegal avenues. To the briefs filed with courts which have determined in advance that this political prisoner must die, we must add our bottomless passion, our voices, and perhaps even our bodies.

Dan Boyer, Houghton MI

Kindly capitalists?

I would be surprised if any Wob thought a capitalist company could be kind, but some claim to be. The company that inspired this letter is Ben & Jerry's.

I was looking through a book that the owners wrote about the business world. They were trying to show how being a 'progressive' business helps get you customers. They had letters written to them by customers to back their claim. I guess an argument could be made that they are trying to make capitalism nicer. Maybe a useless effort, but doesn't make them 'bad people.' But consider...

1. Despite their liberal clams, they don't even pay their workers a living wage here in New Orleans. I asked an employee what they make and he said, "Just minimum." When I heard that I was mad. I've read their literature and they boast about all the causes they support (in writing anyway), but while their literature mentions unions in a positive light they can't even respect the union call for a living wage.

2. To add insult to injury, the *Times-Picayune* had an article today (11/18/98) about some of their employees attempts to unionize the St. Albans' plant. Guess what happened. Did Ben & Jerry's voluntarily recognize the union? NO! Instead Ben & Jerry's Homemade Inc. had their lawyer argue that the union vote should be held at all their plants. A standard anti-union tactic. This is the same thing Mc Donald's said when those teens were trying to organize.

I think anyone that is concerned about workers rights and other progressive issues should boycott Ben & Jerry's on the grounds that they benefit from selling our culture and spitting on the issues that create it.

Jeff Brite

P.S. – Just in case you though the media was doing their job on reporting this, I found this in the Money section, which I suspect reaches a more elite audience (or labor rights fanatics like myself.).

Model slaves

Over the years we have discovered that the earth is not flat after all and the sun no longer circles the earth. Since we're not perfect, it should not be surprising that our senses fail us from time to time.

Magicians and con artists can fool us too, if we're not careful. I can think of many more ... about how our 'leaders' ion government, our schooling, all the media, are all designed to make a model slave of you. We wage slaves are all taught to regard all 'leaders' and 'great men' in awe.

When mankind started to till the soil and domesticate animals, he was able to produce far in excess of his own requirements. Since that time he has made possible a parasite class who have contrived to let others do the work. The modern wage slave, with the aid of modern equipment, has outstripped the former slaves in their ability to produce. We have filled the world with commodities, but alas, only those folks with money can partake. Many must starve in a world bursting at its seams.

All forms of life propagate their species and mankind is no exception. Me-thinks that man has forgotten the purpose of life. He now lives to eat, rather than eat to live. In his mad quest for profits he has turned the earth into a battle ground. The slaves do the fighting and the parasite directs the action. Under their direction we pollute the air and water, use the lakes and oceans for dump sites and strip the forests.

There is a way out, however. The Socialist suggests that we eliminate the cause of this mad rush to oblivion. Let us establish a new life-style, in a word socialism – "from each according to our abilities to each according to our needs" – no buying or selling, no wages, no countries or borders. Just free access to all we produce, world-wide.

W. Hewitson, Boston

IU 120: Lumber Workers
IU 330: Building Construction Workers
IU 450: Print & Publishing House Workers
IU 460: Food Processing Workers
IU 510: Marine Transport Workers
IU 560: Communications Workers
IU 610: Health Service Workers
IU 620: Education Workers
IU 630: Entertainment Workers
IU 640: Restaurant & Hotel Workers
IU 660: General Distribution Workers
IU 670: Public Service Workers

Industrial Worker

THE VOICE OF REVOLUTIONARY INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

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1999 IWW officers elected

Elected to the 1999 General Executive Board (in order of votes received) were Morgan Miller, Monica Berini, Bob Rivera, Penny Pixler. Robert Helms, Dennis Georg and John Persak. Mark Damron is first alternate.

Fred Chase was re-elected General Secretary-Treasurer, The 1999 General Assembly will be held over the Labor Day weekend in Winnipeg. The *Industrial Worker* will be edited by a new Detroit collective.

A proposal to allow former General Executive Board member Ed Jahn to rejoin the union was overwhelmingly rejected. Jahn was expelled by the 1990 General Assembly for a campaign of disruption of union activities that included erasing the computer hard drive on which IWW membership records were stored.

Most other referenda were approved, including proposals to make it more difficult to organize industrial unions, make people as young as 4 years old eligible for IWW membership, and establish an International Solidarity Commission.

Proposals to eliminate restrictions on the number of terms IWW officers can be elected to and allow paid officials of other unions or political parties to hold IWW membership were rejected.

Nearly 360 valid ballots were cast.

Polish Wobblies Organizing

Starting with just two members in August, our Polish fellow workers are now on the verge of chartering a General Membership Branch in Warsaw, and also have an active group in Krakow. They petitioned for national registration as a union in November, and have been leafleting workplaces throughout Warsaw.

They are in the middle of their first campaign – taking on a telemarketing firm employing mainly disabled persons (in exchange for fat tax benefits and government subsidies). Despite the subsidies, the boss is always late in paying wages and working conditions are extremely poor.

The Warsaw branch is also laying the groundwork for organizing efforts in transportation and in a couple of large manufacturing plants. They are planning a series of open pub meetings in different districts of Warsaw and preparing their own newspaper, the first issue of which they hope to publish this month.

Wrafton Pharmaceuticals

While organizing hit a few roadblocks after a promising start, North Devon (UK) Wobs now have an in-plant presence at Wrafton Pharmaceuticals. After years of resisting unionization, when Wobblies started organizing Wrafton suddenly discovered the virtues of business unionism and invited the TGWU into the plant.

The TGWU has been waging an anti-IWW campaign, and arranged to hold two in-plant meetings to be addressed by TGWU officials and the owner. However, not a single worker attended either meeting.

Around Our Union

Wobbly band wins Victoria Grand Final

Melbourne punk/ska/rockabilly band No Solution won the Push/Manny's Grand Final of the statewide Battle of the Bands at Pushover 98 on Nov. 21st.

The event, held at the Myer Music bowl, saw nine bands from around Victoria, Australia, do battle for $5000 worth of stuff. No Solution, from the western suburb of Melton and featuring two Melbourne Wobblies, took first place with a five-song set including their own version of "I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night" titled "Joe Hill."

IWWs picket Hyundai dealer

Chicago Wobblies joined other activists Dec. 12 in an 18-person protest at a Hyundai dealer in suburban Orland Park, distributing leaflets and speaking with customers about the struggle of workers at Hyundai's Han Young subcontractor in Tijuana who have been on strike for several months.

The dealer told Wobs he would stop carrying Hyundais at the end of the year. Former General Secretary-Treasurer Kathy Taylor contributed several songs for the occasion, including this one (to the tune of God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen).

Tidings of Solidarity

God rest ye Hyundai sales force,
Let nothing you dismay.
Be glad we're not here picketing you
Every single day.
It's just a token show of force
So we can have our say,
Oh, tidings of solidarity, Solidarity.
Oh tidings of solidarity.

In a place called Tijuana
In a factory called Han Young,
The folks who build your chassis
Formed a U-nion.
The bosses threw a holy fit
And tried to cut and run.
Oh, tidings of solidarity …

Then from the Han Young owners
The intimidation came,
And the government of Mexico
Brought tidings of the same.
The union workers stood their ground
And put them all to shame.
Oh, tidings of solidarity …

And other sweatshop workers then
Rejoiced much in mind,
An independent union might
Maquilas redesign.
Our power to improve our lot grows
Thus when we combine.
Oh, tidings of solidarity …

And we in North America
Who sweatshops still recall,
Will offer our support to those
In struggles great and small.
We know an Injur-y to One
Is an Injury to All.
Oh, tidings of solidarity, Solidarity.
Oh tidings of solidarity.

Try it, it sings quite well.

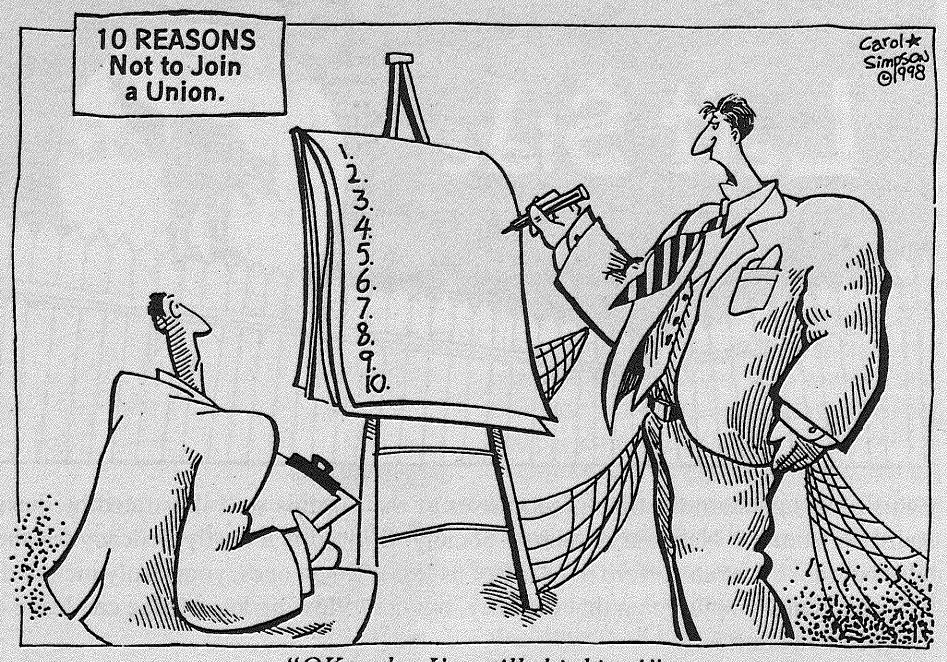
Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. **Between these two classes** a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interests of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system." **It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism.** The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with the capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.



"OK…ok…I'm still thinking!"

Microradio Wobs under the FCC Boot

At about 3:45 p.m. on November 30, FCC agents from the Tampa, Florida, field office and other enforcement agents raided the studio of Free Radio Gainesville, 94.7 FM. This is just a few weeks following the raids on Free Radio Memphis 94.7 FM, where arrests and seizures of equipment were made.

This is particularly alarming in that Free Radio Gainesville is a project worked on by many local IWW members, is a job branch, and is the birthplace of Soapboxing the Airwaves, our syndicated IWW radio show. Free Radio Memphis also has a significant number of Wobblies involved, as well as a weekly IWW-specific show and Soapboxing the Airwaves.

The raid on Free Radio Gainesville was unique in that the FCC thugs busted in the house and took the equipment when no one was at the house or on the air. A DJ was headed over to the station to do his show and noticed the activity outside of the house from where we broadcast from. Instead of going in, he double-backed and left and came back later to find all of our equipment gone and some paperwork from the agents.

No one was at the station when we were raided and no one was arrested. But the renter of the location later received a letter in the mail informing him that he is being fined $6,000. The Free Radio Gainesville Collective is now making a call to all supporters for solidarity in the form of radio equipment (especially a transmitter!), financial help or legal help. We will of course also be communicating with our community to encourage supporters to take specific actions to help us.

After this and other calls for solidarity were sent out via email, the U.S. Department of Justice anonymously sent out an "informational notice" to microradio supporters which stated that "a person who knowingly donates money or equipment to an unlicensed radio station so that it may continue to broadcast without a license could be guilty of aiding and abetting the violation of a federal law (U.S.C. 301)" further, the message stated that "aiding and abetting a violation of 47 U.S.C. 301 is punishable by up to one year in prison or a fine of up to $10,000 or both."

Obviously these thugs will stop at nothing to intimidate people from exercising their constitutional right to fight the corporate monopoly over our airwaves. As Lyn Gerry of Radio4all has stated, "these tactics are more fitting to a police state than an alleged democracy." The Department of Justice "announcement" is currently being evaluated by the National Lawyer's Guild to determine it's constitutionality. Given the circumstances, checks can be made out to Jason Adams (Secretary of the Gainesville IWW GMB) and equipment and information can be sent to the Gainesville IWW GMB (who knows what we'll do with it...).

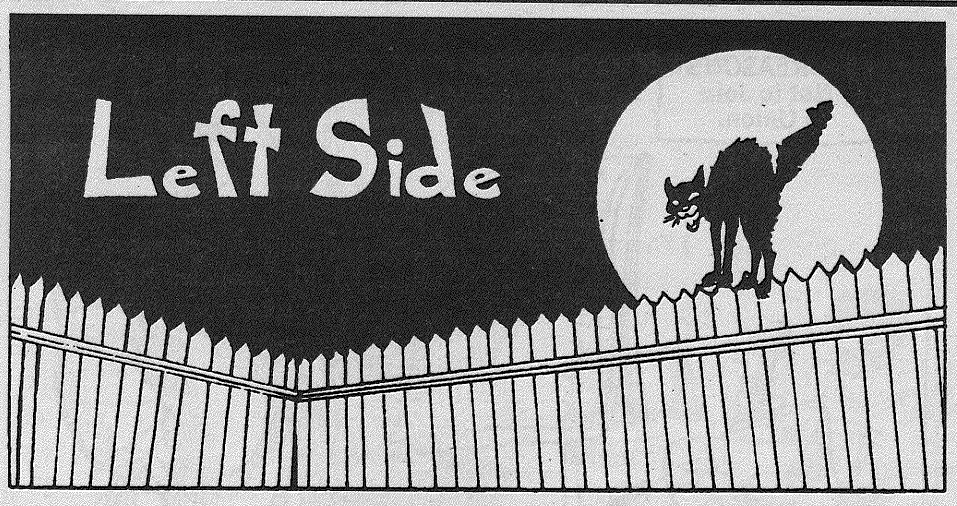
Most importantly, we wish to communicate that we do *not* take intend to take this abuse lying down. We are ready and willing to fight to get our radio station back, to consult with others wanting to start their own "free radio" stations and to engage in the required struggle to win the hearts and minds of our community.

Our mission statement reads as follows: "Free Radio Gainesville is a political radio station. As operators of a micro-powered broadcast station, we intend to educate, agitate and activate our community for truth, justice, and freedom of expression. It is our mission to contribute to the radical media project of countering the deluge of corporate lies, half-truths and omissions; to open up the airwaves to the wealth of cultural and political diversity that exists in our community; and to thereby build on the hard work of local radical media projects such as the Gainesville Iguana and the Civic Media Center towards constructing a more informed citizenry and a just, democratic and equal society."

by X345417 & X347628

AFL-CIO's Private Prisons

The AFL-CIO is a major share-holder in Corrections Corp. of America, the nation's largest private prison operator, with an estimated $660 million in 1998 revenues. The federation is opposing management plans to spin off CCA's prison-management operations into three privately held companies.



Capitalism's concern for the unfed masses of the Earth is well illustrated by these statistics from the National Audubon Society. Shrimp is a costly delicacy for the tables of those who can afford it. Many of us less affluent ones, yours truly included, will occasionally splurge on that delicacy, but the following knowledge can leave a disagreeable aftertaste.

For every pound of shrimp that you buy at your local supermarket, at least seven pounds of other sea life is killed and just shoveled overboard. We know shrimp commands a higher retail price than other sea life and the shrimp fishing industry is only interested in the highest profit return, so there is no use talking to those babies, but the seven pounds of other sea life could feed hosts of starving people around our globe.

Perhaps such items as squid, octopi, whelks and various types of seaweed may not be appealing to Anglo-Saxon appetites, but such items have been important as well as nourishing additives to the diet of many peoples around the world – but such is capitalism's regard for the people of this planet.

A new phenomenon in our urban areas is TIF, which stands for tax increment financing – a fancy term for depopulating working-class neighborhoods to make room for those who will pay higher rents and taxes. The areas affected are usually in the center of town, conveniently located for those who wish to have easy reach for their profits. Such an area is the Pilsen barrio here in the Big Windy. For those who may wonder how a barrio has the name of one of the principle cities of the Czech Republic, a century ago this neighborhood was a port of entry for immigrants from Czechoslovakia. The original Slavic population has since moved to outlying areas to be replaced by Mexicans, the result being that the name Pilsen has become synonymous with Mexican.

It is here in the Big Windy that the TIFtsters are beginning to lean heavy on the residents of the Pilsen neighborhood. This neighborhood which is conveniently close to downtown also happens to abut the ever expanding University of Illinois in Chicago, which has already displaced the old Maxwell Street Market. Those readers who are of college age or have progeny of college age are well aware that universities are far from being non-profit institutions and a lot of erstwhile residential areas have been absorbed into college campuses.

The Pilsen area is populated by upwards of 40,000 Mexicans, many of who are not adequately conversant in English and a notice has been circulated in a bilingual flyer that reads in part:

"The plaintiffs received the actual audio recording of the commission's hearing on the Pilsen TIF on April 28th. The tapes support:

"Claims of Discrimination: The commission refused to allow a volunteer translator for the Spanish speakers whose testimony was omitted from the original typed transcripts made by the city. …

"Violation of Due Process: Chairperson Louie imposed arbitrary and capricious time restraints, denying witnesses their opportunity to be heard.

"Denial of Freedom of Speech: The commission refused to allow testimony in opposition to the TIF, in violation of our First Amendment rights.

"Violation of Equal Protection: The commission's responses to the witnesses that testified in Spanish make is apparent that they did not understand what they were hearing and therefore must have excluded the testimony of those witnesses from their deliberations."

So much for the professed "freedom of speech" and "free and equal{ here in this part of Freedomland. At least they have not made any "solemn treaties." But it should not be surprising when a state senator by the name of James Philip made the remark that "minorities do not have the same work ethic that 'we' do." Just what the Hell is this work ethic? The people who occupied this continent before the invaders came along with their monopoly capitalism lived quite comfortably as well as having developed food products that have enriched the rest of humanity and had happy lives without any work ethic. This Judeo-Christian work ethic – which has not only toppled other civilizations, but is also bringing Western Civilization to the brink of extinction – is one of the evils of our human society. Modern industry and capitalism that promotes the work ethic has made our Mother Earth next to uninhabitable with their wars, pollution and their unmerciful scramble for profits.

Your scribe is no adherent to the work ethic, but still manages to keep himself in frijoles and fry bread without sponging on others, which is more than can be said for those who blabber about the work ethic. Yet we stand outcast and starving 'midst the wonders we have made.

Poor ol' Groucho Marx! Despite his no longer being with us, he is still on the FBI's list of suspicious people. There is still a big file on him at that auspicious organization's headquarters. Among other infractions he was guilty of being a friend of Charlie Chaplin, belonged to some progressive committees, and kept otherwise suspectable company.

Maybe the FBI is checking out if Groucho is any relation to Karl?

It's time we put all the fat cats on a reducing diet!

— C.C. Redcloud

Editor's Notebook



Good-bye

As I was working on getting this issue to press, the results of the IWW's balloting came out. This will be my final issue as editor.

While I can't say I'll miss the workload or the steady drain on my none-too-robust finances, I have taken pride in making the *Industrial Worker* once again one of the finest labor newspapers – if not *the* finest – published in North America. And I would be lying to you if I said I had much hope that my successors will continue in this vein.

The paper had missed three consecutive issues when I became editor in September 1994. It lacked a clear editorial vision, most copies went undistributed, it was a mess. It took hard work, but today, four years later, the *IW* is essentially self-supporting financially, we have a solid core of writers, circulation is way up. And most importantly, the newspaper has a clear focus – it is once again a revolutionary *labor* newspaper.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of our members have joined since I became editor, and so take for granted standards that in fact had to be struggled for. It takes both skills and vision to produce a newspaper worth reading, and each was often in somewhat short supply in the past.

And it is quite clear that the incoming editorial collective lacks either one. Only one member has ever written for this paper, and the trial issue they produced was a model of bad design and cut-and-paste "journalism." I turn the *IW* over to them with a heavy heart, hoping that they will grow into the responsibilities they have sought.

What Sort of Newspaper?

The election was not a close one. The Detroit Collective enters with a solid mandate, though I think most members have no more idea of the sort of newspaper they intend to produce than I do. (Indeed, I don't think they themselves have given it much thought.)

Wobblies are a diverse lot, involved in many different struggles and with many different interpretations of what it means to be a revolutionary union. As editor, I have struggled to balance a respect for this diversity with a broader unifying vision. It is a somewhat tricky balance to uphold, and no doubt things got a bit wobbly at times. But as my tenure draws to its end, I remain proud of what was accomplished.

A growing chorus of critics attacked my editorial performance in the last year. Some wanted a paper with the revolution cut out, others wanted less labor news; some wanted to cozy up to the labor fakers, others demanded that every article castigate its subjects for falling short of the IWW ideal. A few even insisted that I stop editing articles for grammar and spelling.

Much of this criticism was in fact dishonest. I have been attacked for not publishing material that was never sent in, for making editorial changes that I did not make, and for expressing views that I not only did not express, but have consistently opposed.

Union Scabbing

And I have been attacked for upholding the IWW's long and honorable tradition of condemning union scabbing. I have no apologies for demanding that unions respect each other's picket lines. So long as union members continue to undermine each other's struggles, we will continue to face defeat after defeat. Union scabbing is class treason, and I have condemned it unreservedly.

When immigrant truck drivers struck the Los Angeles ports two and a half years ago, demanding a living wage and recognition of their union, dock and rail workers continued loading and unloading the trucks driven by scabs. Perhaps this was required by their contracts, as some have suggested. Perhaps the bosses could have gotten an injunction against solidarity actions (they own the courts, after all). But the simple fact remains – workers were on strike, and unionized workers helped to break that strike by working behind picket lines and handling scab cargo.

Some people have recently tried to deny that a strike was on or have claimed that workers were not picketing the scabs, but rather "blockading" them. These attempts to justify union scabbing are contemptible, but unfortunately confused some members who did not follow the strike at the time.

But this criticism is also bizarre.

I do not understand why people who believe it's OK to cross picket lines are in the IWW in the first place, and indeed I would invite them to leave. Nor do I understand those who argue that we ought not to criticize business unionism and be a consistent voice for real union democracy and determined resistance. The international labor movement is in a very bad way just now, and the solution is not at all to close ranks behind those who got us there.

Entitled to the Best

Too many of us have been so overwhelmed building the IWW that we have not taken the time to clearly articulate our differences and to fight for them. When IWW headquarters proved incapable of providing the support necessary to facilitate organizing, several former officers quietly stepped in to fill the breach. When basic bureaucratic tasks were bungled we have quietly done what we could to minimize the damage. I have largely ignored my critics, because I have been too busy keeping the union functioning, and because I trusted that my fellow workers would recognize who was doing this vital work.

Those of us who have muted our criticisms and taken up the work must shoulder a large part of the blame for the membership's failure to recognize that a change in administration was essential. Similarly, our faith that members would make their way through the sloppy, convoluted language of several of the constitutional amendments that just passed and reject them even though the GST forgot to include discussion of them in our internal bulletin has proven to be misplaced.

I do take encouragement from the overwhelming rejection of Ed Jahn's bid to re-enter our union, the one issue on the ballot to receive substantive advance debate.

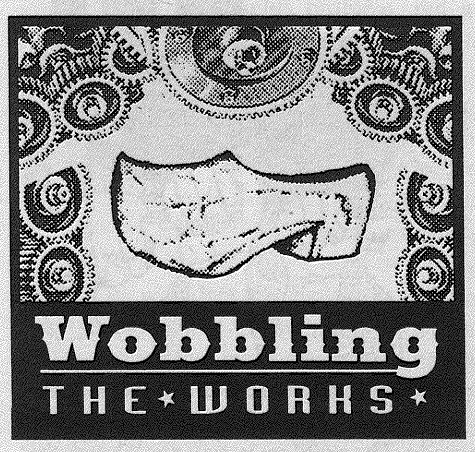
The IWW is in an exciting time. We are rapidly adding members, building our industrial presence, and exploring the possibilities of once again functioning as a truly international unionism. But we are also in a state of crisis. Our finances are a wreck, our internal structures are badly frayed, and bankruptcy looms. If the IWW is to survive this crisis, we will have to demand a level of seriousness and competence that has been too often lacking.

What the future holds for our union, and for our newspaper, I cannot say. In large part that future will be determined by what we – the members – are prepared to tolerate, and what we undertake to realize through our own efforts. I urge everyone to be vigilant, and to refuse to accept mediocrity or abandonment of Wobbly principles.

As for me, I have a promising organizing drive underway where I work. I have several projects that got pushed to the side under the urgent necessities of getting out this newspaper. I will continue to work with the *Libertarian Labor Review*. And I have a fight to wage to preserve our union from those who would transform it into an appendage of the labor fakers, as well as from those who simply lack the skills and the vision to move us ahead.

Yours for the One Big Union,
Jon Bekken, X331117

Strikes and the Law, part 1



Under American law, different types of strikes have different legal protections. In coming columns, I will outline the general categories of strikes as known to rebel workers and as defined by law.

The term "strike" is commonly known to mean the temporary withdrawal from work by a group of workers who are seeking to better their conditions or the conditions of the society they live in. Striking workers plan on returning to work once their demands are met. There are all kinds of strikes in labor's arsenal.

The *primary strike* is the best known. It is a strike by workers from a single employer who seek a direct benefit for themselves. A *secondary strike* is when workers in a position to affect the business dealings of a boss from another company take action on behalf of their fellow workers. Unionized workers at Plant A go on strike to force their boss to pressure his buddy at company B to settle a dispute with the same union. Secondary strikes are made to win a direct benefit for the union involved. Related in concept is the *sympathy strike* where two or more unions might be involved and the striking workers receive an "incidental" benefit – the strengthening of the labor movement.

Wobblies and other militant unionists have often struck on the job to win their demands. A *sit-down strike* is one such kind of action. Workers occupy their workplace but refuse to work. Related to the sit-down is a *slowdown* where the rate of work is slowed to cause an inefficiency that the boss can remedy by meeting demands of the workers. A *hiccup strike* is when work is stopped very briefly at a strategic time by one worker, and then another worker, and then another worker. The IWW pamphlet *A Worker's Guide to Direct Action* ($1 postpaid from the Philadelphia Branch, address listed in the directory on page 2) discusses striking on the job and mixes in anecdotes of workers who have tried a myriad of direct action tactics. It is truly an inspiration to read, so get yourself a copy!

Wildcat strikes are generally spontaneous, but can also be extremely organized by rank and file union members. It is a strike that the parent union disclaims responsibility for, and is normally in breach of a collective bargaining agreement.

Unions engage in a *partial strike* when workers in a strategic department at one workplace go out on strike, but other union members remain on the job and draw pay. Partial strikes are generally won with the aid of outside unions which refuse to cross picket lines. Sometimes the term partial strike is also used to mean a kind of direct action where workers refuse to do a particular task (for instance, they keep teaching but refuse to grade papers, as in the case of Yale graduate students).

One Big Unionists like myself are disheartened to see *jurisdictional strike,* especially common in building trades and the maritime industry, when new kinds of work introduced by the boss get two or more unions in a dispute over who will represent the people who do the new work. A union will then strike to force the boss to pick their union to represent his wage slaves.

A *whipsaw strike* is a pattern of successive strikes on members of an employers' association. Whipsaw strikes help a union's bargaining position by threatening the employer with a decrease in the market share because customers will have to turn to competitors that are not being struck.

A *general strike* is the stoppage of work by most or all of the workers in a particular industry, or most or all workers in a city or geographic region. Sometimes workers in a whole nation, or workers in different countries in the same industry cooperate in a general strike, too. The general strike is usually used to change industry-wide conditions, anti-labor legislation, or state repression. In the United States, general strikes are severely restricted by the National Labor Relations Act of 1947 and are subject to injunction and executive action.

The law takes all of the above kinds of strikes and looks at the issues precipitating them to figure which one of three types of broad legal groupings they fit into: *economic strike, employer unfair labor practice strike,* or *union unfair labor practice strike.* In my next column, I will discuss the criteria the law has established to determine which of these three categories any given strike fits into, and the legal protections striking workers in all categories are given.

— Alexis Buss

Do you have a question about strikes or direct action? The next three Wobbling the Works columns will be devoted to discussing issues around strikes. Send your questions and ideas to: Alexis Buss, PO Box 42531, Philadelphia PA 19101 or e-mail phillyiww@iww.org.

Wobbling the Works is a column designed to inform workers about laws, the limitations and dangers of relying on the legal system to gain better conditions or protect our rights, and how best to use the protections we have.

from the desk of...

I have a bit of a headache this morning, most likely from tension. Last night I hung around General Headquarters until 2 a.m. as a stalwart crew of southeast Michigan Wobblies counted the ballots in the union election, the largest and possibly one of the most important in the last 47 years. Phil and Lee Booth, Robin Hood, Carol Igoe, Mark Kaufmann, Ingrid Kock, and Marie Mason have gotten fairly used to exploiting themselves for the sake of the One Big Union. For Dave Alper, Ellen Chase (no relation, but I sure do like that last name) and Jim Reyburn, veterans of other struggles, it was a baptism of fire in the Wobbly cauldron. The union owes them all a major vote of thanks. As they were counting this fourth and most complex ballot with which I've been involved, I thought back to the first ballot counting I witnessed in '95. Then it took some personal arm twisting to get the minimally required 3 Wobs to be on the ballot committee. This time if arms were twisted, I didn't know about it. The call was put out and they came. I count them among my heroes.

I'm not big on competition except when it's a matter of going up against the bosses. While I'm certainly pleased and grateful that a majority of the voting members saw fit to give me another shot at getting it right in my first contested election, there was no pleasure in calling Alexis Buss to let her know the results. She's my pal. It's no fun to see a pal lose, especially one with all of her talents. She didn't lose by much. There were two congratulatory emails awaiting me this morning. One said "I really thought Alexis would win," the other "I knew you had a chance." It was no cake walk.

Much as I braced myself not to take it personally if I lost, I now have to accept that a determining factor in my re-election was most likely a desire for continuity in a time of growth. A proposal on the ballot to eliminate term limits failed by a substantial margin. Wobblies make it pretty clear they don't want any one person wearing holes in the fabric of the GST's squeaky chair. I have no doubt that Alexis will be GST one day. In the meantime I'm hoping she'll continue to let us exploit her impressive skills as an organizer. It's a much more valuable role than that of a musty bureaucrat. Now we need to figure out some way to make that role financially viable for her. A dues increase passed. Perhaps in time that will help.

A major change resulting from the election is the passing of the editorship of the *Industrial Worker* from Fellow Worker Jon Bekken to a collective of Wobs in the Detroit area which includes some of the locked-out Detroit newspaper workers. Jon's skill and dedication in putting the paper out month after month is greatly appreciated. The collective folks are hoping that many hands will allow for building on the solid base he has established. Jon's participation in the collective is sought and would be most welcomed. In any case the union owes him a huge debt of thanks for his efforts over the years.

And so we move forward. We've been growing at an annual rate of 33 percent in recent years. It seems to be a synergistic situation. More Wobs mean more actions means more visibility means even more Wobs mean.... The classic movie line is "If you build it, they will come." Well, we're building and they're coming. A goodly portion of that growth is in Europe and Australia. One of the ballot propositions gave structure to Regional Organizing Committees to deal with union expansion outside of North America, reflected in this year's receipt of ballots from Great Britain, Austria, Germany, Italy, Australia and probably one or two countries I'm forgetting, as well as from the U.S. and Canada. Another proposition established an International Solidarity Commission. It's going to take a global union to deal with global capital. We're getting ready.

While the growth has been steady and substantial (report of a new General Membership Branch in Louisville came in as I checked email last night for messages relating to the election.), there has been a feeling for the last year or so that we are just an inch short of a major breakthrough. One of these days we're finally going to pick up that big shop that has managed to elude us despite several very close calls in recent months. I won't be surprised if we get it in the coming year. After that the sky's the limit.

Wishing you all the season's best and expecting to see many of you on the picket line in '99.

— Fred Chase, General Secretary-Treasurer

Down Colombia Way

As I settled into my seat on the Avianca flight down to Cartagena, I picked up *Cromos,* the magazine in the pocket in front of me. The cover story dealt with the Colombian president's wife: Isn't she wonderful? But another feature described a massacre that took 114 lives, and a third described the training routine of the revolutionaries in the jungle.

My friend met me at the airport, and we went back to her place in the center of town. From there, I proceeded to see the Palace of the Inquisition (too late for the last auto da fe), the small gold museum, St. Peter Claver's church and bones, the great Spanish fort, and many other sights. I also sank into a local volcanic mud bath and ate a rustic seafood dinner on the beach. Cartagena, being a port of call for several cruise ships going through the Panama Canal, is quiet. Anyone likely to make serious trouble has been bought off, scared off, or killed off.

Catching the flight back I was put through so many checks and searches it was like going to prison. I wondered when someone was going to pick me up by the heels and shake me to see what was under my fillings. On the plane, the Medellin paper was handed out. A page one story told of the rescue of 14 kidnapped businessman from the guerrillas. Unfortunately, five of the abductees were killed in the gun battle that erupted when the kidnappers' hide-out was discovered.

In Miami I was met by a suspicious customs inspector and a frisky dog who sniffed me all over, but to no avail. All I had were some tiny emeralds and models of the colorful buses that roam the Colombian hinterlands.

I also returned with the sense of having had a front-row seat at a national tragedy that shows no sign of ending. Civil war in one form or another has been going on in Colombia for decades. There are literally thousands of people who have grown up in it, serving since their teens in the military, the paramilitary, the guerrillas, the drug lords' gangs, etc., learning no skills beyond those of killing. How do you ever integrate such persons into civilian life, even if peace should break out tomorrow? However, no one seems to have the vision or the power to put a stop to the carnage.

As a foreigner I could leave the theater whenever I felt like it. For most Colombians there is no exit. How they stay sane is a mystery to me.

Most of this turmoil is a direct result of our war on drugs. Ironically, drug use in Colombia itself is not a major problem, since it is seen largely as an activity of the "lower classes" and has no panache associated with it. For Colombians living far below the poverty line, drug trafficking is simply a way to make money off American vices. With so much illegal cash to be had so easily, human life becomes cheap, and the civil life of the country itself is threatened.

I will confess to feeling relieved when the plane touched down on American soil. But I could not help wondering how much longer it will be before the wars we have waged so long by proxy in small, weak nations come home to roost.

— John Gorman

Industrial Worker Sustaining Fund

Robert Krzewinski, Ypsilanti MI	$10.00
Reuben Solomon, Flushing NY	20.00
Raymond Solomon, Rego Park, NY	18.00
Ron Lybarger, Plymouth OH	10.00
John Dahl, Compostelo, Mexico	25.00
McArthur Gunter ,Camp Springs	19.05

Many thanks, fellow workers, for your generous support.

Wobbling the Frisco waterfront

More than 100 "casuals," "extras" and other low-seniority waterfront workers attended a Nov. 18 Dock & Shipboard Safety and Survival Training Session sponsored by the IWW's San Francisco Bay Ports Marine Transport Workers Industrial Union Branch.

The session was led by veteran longshoreman Tony Machado, who coordinates International Longshore & Warehouse Union Local 10's safety training program for lashers and is a former member of the San Francisco port's Joint Accident Prevention Committee, and held at the ILWU Local 10 hall at Fisherman's Wharf. IWW members distributed leaflets announcing the session at marine terminals in the ports of San Francisco and Oakland, and at local union dispatch halls.

The program was aimed at the large number of workers who are not part of the registered longshore force, and thus not full ILWU members, who are dispatched on a daily basis to work on the docks. While these workers are covered under the ILWU contract and the Pacific Coast Marine Safety Code the ILWU has negotiated with the Pacific Maritime Association (which represents bosses on the West Coast), few have ever seen the Code or received basic safety training. As a result, several dockworkers have suffered accidents and injuries that could have been prevented.

Many casuals on the docks work at breakneck speed in hopes of ingratiating themselves with the bosses and getting more work, endangering themselves and everyone working around them and undermining working conditions in the process. Workers who participate in such speed-ups inadvertently assist the bosses in reducing employment on the waterfront at the cost of their health, and potentially of their lives.

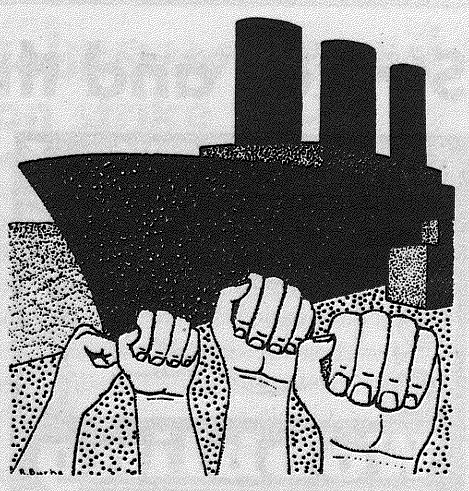
Since the bosses weren't getting safety information into workers' hands, MTW members decided to do the job themselves. In his presentation, Machado called attention to common Safety Code violations, discussed how to work defensively and watch out for others, and when and how to refuse dangerous orders from supervisors. (The Safety Code guarantees workers the right to stop work in unsafe situations.)

"If you're asked to do any kind of unsafe work or to work under unsafe conditions," Machado told the audience, "If you know your rights are being violated ... then your gang should just stop work, talk the problem over quickly, and elect your own steward on the spot...

"Then your steward should tell the walking boss that you're working under: 'We aren't gonna work this, it's unsafe.' You should indicate which safety rule is being violated or neglected, and tell him you're standing by until it's safe.

"Sometimes the walking boss will get mad, scream and shout at you, cuss you out. Just let it roll off you, don't pay it any attention. ... If he hollers 'You're all fired!' just calmly inform him that you're walking off the ship to call the business agent.

"Each of you has the same rights on the job ... as the most senior member of Local 10. You all work under the same contract as we do. The problem is, you don't know that, so supervision thinks they can push you around."



Several workers attending the session asked to join the IWW afterwards. IWW organizing efforts are also underway in Seattle and Portland, and Wobs are working with other unionists on the waterfront to defend union conditions as longshore contracts come up for renewal this summer.

Solidarity slows Kaiser...

continued from page 1

ship from docking. Foss tugboats, operated by Inland Boatman's Union members, cruised by to check at the action, as did Coast Guard vessels.

The effort has been a boon for IWW efforts to organize on the waterfront in the Puget Sound, as the action had resulted in much publicity for the IWW, and many contacts have been made in the industry for future activity. Seattle MTWs continue to meet with militant steel workers, who have pledged to support the IWW in future drives.

The action has also marked a turning point for Earth First! The action in Tacoma proves that radical environmentalists can support workers. EF! organizers maintained that this was "the steelworker's show," while at the same time reminded the press of Maxxam's unsafe practices in the lumber industry with Pacific Lumber.

— John Persak



Making the Labor-Environment Connection

Since industry has made its mark on our land and our working lives, employers have always been able to connect the issues of labor and the environment, which hasn't necessarily been a good thing. Maximum returns to the stockholders have always been at the expense of workers' safety, health and jobs, and environmental laws have always been manipulated to facilitate efficient production of "goods."

The USWA has borne the brunt of the steel barons' war against workers in the last couple of years. Workers at Oregon Steel in Colorado were locked out of their jobs and replaced by scabs, and was able to ride out the financial difficulty thanks to a generous line of credit granted by Wells Fargo Bank to bust the union. Similarly, Kaiser has been loaned millions of dollars to aid in smashing the USWA in the Kaiser facilities in Ohio, Louisiana and Washington state.

Kaiser Aluminum owner Maxxam, headed by corporate raider Charles Hurwitz, also made enemies in the California redwoods when he acquired Pacific Lumber, vowing to leave no old growth standing.

In its efforts to bust the USWA, Kaiser has brought in housing for the scabs, locating the units on a potential super-fund site inside the gates of the Tacoma plant itself. Naturally, health officials have turned their heads away from zoning and safety laws that prohibit letting even scabs live on polluted land in an industrial area.

The Sea Diamond was loaded in Australia with bauxite for use at the Kaiser plants. The ILWU and Steelworkers were already under the thumb of an injunction, after ILWU members honored a November picket of a ship carrying ore to Kaiser. But the IWW decided to picket the ship in solidarity with the Kaiser workers.

A crowd of 150 labor and environmental activists joined the picket line, and the pier was shut down for the entire day. Safety problems discovered after the action delayed unloading even further.

Solidarity in Oakland

Two hundred protesters, including striking steelworkers and the Bay Area Coalition for Headwaters, marched on Oakland (Calif.) City Hall Dec. 2 to support the ongoing strike against Kaiser Aluminum, protect the ancient redwoods of Headwaters Forest, and protest a logging plan proposed by Pacific Lumber Company. Both Pacific Lumber and Kaiser are owned by Maxxam.

"Having a sustainable policy as far as jobs and economic policy and a sustainable policy for sound environmental concerns are one and the same," said David Foster, director of USWA District 11.

Some 3,100 USWA workers have been on strike against Kaiser Aluminum since Sept. 30, after management proposed the elimination of up to 900 jobs in contract negotiations. The company has refused to negotiate over the issue.

Brazil ports strike

Brazilian port workers struck Nov. 24 to protest a presidential decree to allow firms to hire workers directly, rather than through the union hall. 50,000 workers walked off the docks across the country after Congress confirmed the decree, part of an ongoing effort to privatize port operations.

Some 250,000 tons of sugar were tied up in Brazil's main port, Santos, by the strike and dozens of vessels were stranded. Police say strikers stormed the employers' Santos headquarters, using their bare limbs to shatter windows and destroying records and office equipment.

Neptune Jade...

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front of the courthouse, protesting the PMA's attempt to force the ILWU to turn over its union records. The judge upheld the union's position. Many longshore workers were threatening a coastwide walk-out if the PMA suit continued.

A benefit concert by British singer/songwriter Billy Bragg to raise funds for the Neptune Jade Defense Committee was quickly transformed into a victory celebration. Bragg and his band, the Blokes, enraptured a crowd of hard-core union members (some of them in their 50s and 60s) and young modern-rock fans at Maritime Hall.

Maritime bosses quickly expressed hope that dropping the lawsuit would help avert a widely expected strike when the International Longshore and Warehouse Union's contract with the PMA expires July 1. The *Journal of Commerce* headlined its account, "Dock strike threat eases on West Coast."

"We felt the Neptune Jade decision was a way for us to show good faith," PMA President Joseph Miniace said. "Now we can examine other issues on the waterfront."

But for many longshoremen, the PMA's action was too little too late. "For the arrogant Miniace, who has frequently vowed to hold accountable both the union and the labor activists on the picket line, this is a humiliating defeat," Robert Irminger said.

The upcoming contract negotiations will be particularly difficult, as longshoremen are outraged over unilateral changes to their benefit programs, treatment of retirees, and other issues. The PMA is demanding that workers give up the right to honor picket lines and to stop work over safety concerns.

Last year the PMA filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles seeking to scrap the traditional grievance machinery established under the union contract and replace it with a "special master" who would rule immediately on the validity of all work stoppages and order dockworkers back to work.

The ILWU has authorized an assessment of its members to raise $1 million by summer for a strike fund in the event a contract is not reached by July 1.

Aftermath of Liverpool Dock Strike

Liverpool was once the strongest union port in Britain, a country where all dockworkers were unionized for over a hundred years.

Under past Prime Minister Maggie Thatcher, however, British ports were turned over to private companies. Union recognition was withdrawn, and today every port in Britain is non-union. On Sept. 29, 1995, speedup and tumbling wages drove 500 workers to strike the Mersey Dock and Harbour Company. They were all promptly fired and replaced.

In the last decade, privatization has spread to Mexico, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and elsewhere. In most cases, the process has led to mass layoffs, destruction of unions, and declining wages and working conditions. In some cases, as in the Mexican port of Veracruz in 1989, privatization has been carried out at the point of a gun.

When their strike started, Liverpool dockers fanned out to ports around the world. First setting up picket lines on Philadelphia wharves, they won the support of east coast dockworkers. Their message then met a sympathetic response in San Francisco, where longshoremen have a long tradition of stopping work in support of workers in other countries. A year ago, they refused to unload the Neptune Jade, a ship loaded in Britain by the struck company. The vessel then found itself a modern-day Flying Dutchman, as it traveled the world seeking a crew which would move its cargo.

Mike Carden is one of the sacked Liverpool dock workers and represents the northwest region of England on the general executive council of the Transport and General Workers Union. In this interview with San Francisco labor journalist David Bacon, he explains how the dockers look back on their own struggle.

Just over 350 workers received severance and/or pension money, while more than 100 received nothing. The container area on the Liverpool port is being worked by some 170 strikebreakers employed by Drake International on a piecework basis. Those who work the rest of the breakbulk cargoes in Liverpool are casual. "Quite literally they hide in pubs until they're hired on an as- and when-required basis."

"The rates of pay are certainly less than what dockworkers received prior to their dismissal. And I think the contract is definitely a lot harsher. We know there are problems within the port, and this scab labor force is looking to be unionized — they actually want to be recruited into the Transport and General Workers Union."

The situation has not improved with the ouster of the Tories. Labour) " has no intention of changing any of the labor laws. It sees it as beneficial to the country, beneficial to business, that workers should not have the right to withdraw their labor."

"Half the dockworkers were able to retire from work just because of their age. In a city like Liverpool, where there's massive unemployment, it would be very difficult

Farmworkers & Immigration

We have a labor rights problem, not an immigration problem, when it comes to agricultural work.

The United States has depended for over 100 years on immigrants and people of color doing work in the fields that others have refused to do because of low pay and poor living and working conditions. Without Mexican farmworkers, legal or not, the rest of us wouldn't eat. Failure to enforce fair standards for farmworkers is a conscious policy that takes advantage of problems in other countries. We need to address the pay and conditions faced by farmworkers instead of criminalizing those who put the food on our tables. Those who promote bigotry and anti-immigrant legislation have never had labor's interests at heart.

Free trade allows corporations to cross borders, frequently unencumbered by labor or environmental regulations. Why should corporations be allowed to move from place to place, seeking lower wages, while working people are prevented from moving to seek higher wages? Why are corporate profits more important than the right to make a decent living?

Immigration is U.S. foreign and economic policy coming home to roost. U.S. intervention created and prolonged bloody conflicts which devastated the economies of Central America. U.S.-supplied weapons terrorize peasants in Chiapas, causing many to become refugees. Since the passage of NAFTA, the Mexican economy has collapsed with untold thousands driven off their land and thousands of small businesses driven into bankruptcy. Is it any wonder that the desperation resulting from these policies caused so many people to cross the border into this country, seeking employment?



If U.S. policy were designed to protect the working people of this country, we would expect an increase in funding for Department of Labor inspectors, whose raids penalize employers guilty of breaking the federal labor code. Instead, funding is directed toward the INS, whose raids penalize undocumented workers. Immigration policy has not stopped the entry of undocumented workers. It raises their vulnerability, in order to keep them from standing up for their rights.

INS raids have produced too many horror stories:

• Legal alien residents rounded up with undocumented workers and driven several hours away to another city for interrogation, simply for being Hispanic.

• Raids scheduled just before payday, with no provision for sending workers the money legally owed to them.

• Workers prevented from notifying waiting spouses and small children.

• Denial of access to bathrooms, drinking water and prescription medications.

• Disrespectful, racist comments.

• Dumping of workers in Mexican border towns, penniless, far from their own communities in Mexico.

Even supposing that the INS were to end such abuses, the very premise of U.S. immigration policy is abusive.

Hard-working, tax-paying, low-paid fellow human beings who put the food on our table deserve our respect and our solidarity – not deportation.

Campaign for Labor Rights
(CLR@igc.org)

Labor Challenges Mercosur

The labour movement in the Southern Cone Common Market (Mercosur) is gearing up for a fresh fight at the bloc's summit in Brazil, to demand a social and labor dimension to the regional integration process.

Brazil's Central Unica de Trabalhadores (CUT) demonstrated during the summit, demanding that the presidents of Mercosur members Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay and associates Bolivia and Chile include social clauses in their free trade accords and greater attention to labor.

The unions have been pushing for a binding charter to enforce compliance with core labor standards. But they are unlikely to obtain binding commitments due to one simple reason: today's labor movement is in sharp decline in the region.

The central unions of all six countries in the Mercosur sphere are in crisis, hit hard not only by privatisation processes and threats of economic depression, but also by internal conflicts.

Chile's Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT) has been weakened by a power struggle between communists and the governing Concertacion por la Democracia (the centre-left Coalition for Democracy). Prior to the 1973 coup staged by Gen. Augusto Pinochet, which ushered in 17 years of dictatorship, CUT had over one million members – a number that has shrunk to 400,000 today, of a total workforce of five million.

Also in decline are the once combative Central Obrera Boliviana, Argentina's Confederacion General del Trabajo (CGT), Uruguay's central union, the PIT-CNT (which has lost 80 percent of its members in the past three years), and Brazil's CUT.

Unions are involved in an uphill battle against the conditions imposed by free trade and the deregulation of financial markets and labor relations. Privatisations have led to massive layoffs, especially in Chile and Argentina, as well as further diminishing the labor movement's strength.

Miners and railway, telephone, postal, oil and metallurgical workers have lost much of their strength, and today teachers and health professionals are in the forefront of union struggles. Teachers have led major strikes in Argentina, Bolivia and Chile, protesting austerity plans designed to balance budgets and tighten fiscal spending.

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Liverpool dockers...

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indeed for those people to work again, especially after having been through a two and a half year strike.

"Unemployment is the highest in Europe. Liverpool and Belfast qualify for 'objective one' status, in terms of European aid, because of the high level of unemployment and social deprivation. In certain parts of Liverpool, unemployment is as high as 25-30%. In one or two areas, we're talking about a third generation of unemployment.

"The work is not there. That's one of the dilemmas that not just dockworkers, but large numbers of people in the community of the Merseyside, have to contend with on a daily basis. Work doesn't exist."

DB: When you talk about third generation, you're talking about three generations in a family that have been more or less permanently unemployed?

"That's precisely the situation. I know from personal experience in one area, the Kairby district of Liverpool, it's normal that children growing up have never known their mother or father or uncle to have had employment. That's a whole culture developing there, where unemployment is seen as the norm and employment is seen as most unusual."

DB: You're not painting a very bright prospect as far as the ability of dockworkers, at least those too young to retire, getting jobs at all, much less jobs paying anything like those lost on the dockside.

"That is the situation. Since the end of the dispute we've formed a cooperative based around learning, reskilling and using information technology, particularly in the area of the creative arts. European analysis has come up with the idea that employment possibilities are better in the creative arts. .... So we're examining these possibilities.

"The one thing we've clearly come to understand is that there needs to be a radically new way of thinking about the situation of the unemployed. Where you can't guarantee employment maybe you have to stop talking about unemployment and start talking about people having their own skills and their own rights. We need to give people access, not only to education services, but services in the work sector generated within the community on a cooperative basis. Maybe the so-called unemployed can exchange their skills as a swap or some other system.

"Liverpool dockers, along with a number of other community groups, are examining new ways of addressing long term unemployment. We believe that it's more radical and more helpful than people standing in dole queues with their hands in their pockets for six months, because after six months they get kicked off anyway. ...

"There is no work. While politicians talk about returning to a policy of full employment, in cities like Liverpool and like Glasgow it's very difficult to identify any areas of employment. But I'm optimistic. We need communities like Liverpool to unite and to move forward for the sake of the people who live there. With or without work, people have to live and feed their families. It's not going to be done simply by standing in dole queues and watching the world go by. I think it's about time we started taking some direct action for ourselves, and making things happen.

"Approximately 250 dockworkers have signed up for the cooperative. At the moment we don't have any money to pay them, but we still meet on a monthly basis. We're working on a CD-ROM that's a history of the Liverpool docks dispute. We've got dockworkers on digital film projects, learning those techniques. And we're looking toward having a building in the city center, which we've more or less acquired, but which we don't have the money to pay for. The city council is waiting for the first bill to be paid, and they'll have to wait a little longer. We know an awful lot of businesses who've acquired buildings in the city center and haven 't paid a penny for them, so we don't see ourselves as any different."

Chicago UPS strike

Three thousand workers struck Chicago-area United Parcel Service facilities Dec. 9 for eight hours to protest the use of supervisors to do union work.

Workers last struck over the issue in 1995. The latest strike came 30 days after Teamsters Local 705 won a lawsuit over issues stemming from the 1995 strike. Chicago UPS workers are not covered under the national agreement, with its no-strike clause.

UPS is using its one thousand supervisors in Chicago facilities to sort and load packages during peak work times, helping the company avoid hiring the additional workers promised in last year's contract. The union says that 50 full-time workers would need to be hired to cover the union work being done by supervisors.

Hoffa to head Teamsters union

In a re-run of the election to head the International Brotherhood of Teamsters ordered after former President Ron Carey was removed from office and expelled from the union by government monitors for stealing union funds for his re-election campaign, James P. Hoffa was elected with 55 percent of the vote.

Hoffa supporters also took control of the Teamsters executive board. However, the so-called Independent Review Board established by the government to oversee the union, is considering expelling Hoffa slate member Tom O'Donnell from the union for filing false election reports. O'Donnell paid the salary of a campaign worker who had been convicted of grand larceny to the worker's wife, in order to conceal the fact that there was a felon on the Hoffa Campaign payroll.

Reformers are wondering when the IRB will file charges against Hoffa, who did the exact same thing. While it has not been proven that the Hoffa campaign stole funds from the union treasury, they were found guilty of several violations of union rules including taking funds from employers.

Under government control, the union treasury has been sucked dry (in part because of the huge fees billed to the union by government monitors), while Teamsters for a Democratic Union was transformed into an administration caucus.

The critical struggle to transform the Teamsters into a genuine, democratic union does not lie in electing different officials, or even in having the existing officials thrown out of office, out of union, or into jail (richly deserved as such fates may be). Rather, the challenge is to build rank-and-file control on the job. Workers who have organized to win better conditions on the job and to defend their interests against the bosses will know what to do with the parasites who infest their officialdom at every level.

Mumia Abu-Jamal refuses ABC interview

Political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal refused to participate in an interview with ABC television's "20/20" program in solidarity with locked-out ABC camera workers, video editors and other technical employees, joining a long string of politicians, entertainers and others who have refused to cross the NABET union's picket lines.

ABC locked-out 2,400 NABET members after a one-day strike the day before Election Day over the network's plan to slash their health benefits. ABC has since refused to allow the workers to return.

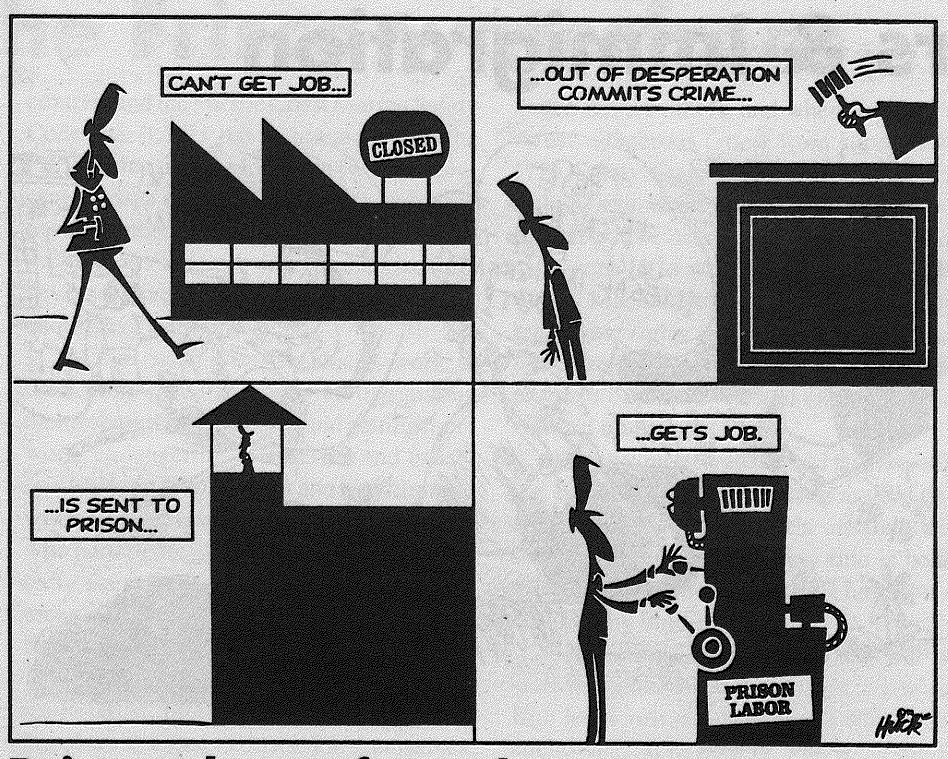
While on-camera and other unionized ABC workers have thus far refused to directly take on the locked-out workers work – resulting in shaky camera work and clumsy edits – they have continued working behind picket lines. Weekend editions of ABC's "World News Tonight" are being produced in London, far from NABET picket lines.

Leonard Weinglass, Mumia's lawyer since 1992, did appear on the ABC program, but was severely (and clumsily) edited to support the program's hatchet job. "20/20" falsified evidence, allowed police witnesses to present unchallenged misinformation, and generally demonstrated once again that the boss press can be trusted to stand up for the bosses.

Ontario violates human rights of welfare workers

The United Nations has condemned Ontario's Prevention of Unionism Act as a "clear violation" of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The Act, which passed the Provincial Legislative Assembly in November, is intended to deny workfare recipients their rights to join a union, bargain collectively and to strike. The UN called on the government "to take measures to repeal the offending provisions."



Prison slaves for sale

Prisoners at the Orient (Ohio) Correctional Institution are now doing computer aided drafting (CAD) for companies such as Krogers supermarkets, American Electric & Power, Munsel Inc, Trans Map, etc.

These companies pay $8 an hour for the work, about half what outside CAD firms would charge. The prisoners are paid 21 to 47 cents per hour. The operation is so profitable that the state of Ohio is allowing a private contractor to open another CAD program at the Marion prison.

Ohio prisoners are also being put to work renovating homes, including being required to do asbestos abatement work without any protective gear.

While serious crime rates continue to decline, prison construction is one of the country's few growth industries. Prisoners are being locked away for ever-longer terms. In California it now costs $22,000 a year to incarcerate someone (four times as much as it costs the state to send them to college). In order to cope with the costs of locking away so many people, states are renting convict labor out at bargain basement prices, enabling employers to slash their labor costs.

"It seems to me that with all this discussion about slavery, we ought to bring up ... the vestiges of slavery within the prison system and the fact that it is becoming a system that is increasingly designed to hold black people ... behind bars, sometimes for the rest of their lives," Angela Davis said at a recent conference on prisons. She is calling for abolishing the prison system.

More workers calling in sick

As "meaner and leaner" U.S. corporations are demanding their reduced workforces put in longer hours, workers' "unscheduled" absences are increasing. Between 1997 and 1998, the number of workers calling in sick rose 25 percent, reaching the highest level in seven years. Such absenteeism now accounts for nearly three of every 100 hours of scheduled work.

As companies insist on longer work weeks (Whatever happened to the 8 hour day?), people have less time at home. Disputes on how to juggle work and family sometimes end up in grievance procedures. Usually, however, workers just call in sick.

A study by CCH Inc. found most unscheduled absences were unavoidable and justified, with "family issues" – often a child too sick for childcare – being the most common reason for missing work, followed by personal illness, personal needs, stress, and what they called an "entitlement mentality." Not only are workers calling in sick more often, according to a study by Aon Consulting Loyalty, increasingly they are taking time to deal with personal obligations – the equivalent of 5.5 days a year, up from 4.5 days in 1995.

Aon President David Strum admitted that many workers are simply hitting the wall when it comes to putting their lives on the back burner to work harder, faster and better. "We're getting a time-out from the belief that companies can get more out of people each year. There really is a stop zone."

As the song says, our lives are more than our work and our work is more than our jobs. But individual actions like calling in sick more than a couple times are risky; even if you get away with it, you haven't changed the company's policy. Only concerted activity can do that.

— Penny Pixler

IWW Fighting Fund

Clement Joseph, New York NY	$10
David Mashni, Hamilton MI	60
Phyllis Calese, New York NY	40
Tom Johnson, New Market NH	5
Barbara Briggs, New Market NH	5
Glen Libby, Utica MI	35
Total raised to date:	$2516
Goal by Dec. 30:	$5,000

Your contribution helps support IWW outreach and to reduce our deficits.

The Flames of Discontent

Jobs are plentiful and incomes are rising faster than inflation (if at a snail's pace), the pundits lament, and still study after study shows workers are dissatisfied and don't trust their bosses.

A recent survey by a leading management consulting firm suggests the discontent may be spreading upwards. Kepner-Tregoe, whose clients include many of the Fortune 500, found that a majority of workers said co-workers were dissatisfied and that top management failed to address issues that led key workers to quit. Asked to compare their management to 1. a finely synchronized symphony orchestra, 2. a medieval kingdom top-heavy with power and 3. a three-ring circus, workers and supervisors chose numbers 2 and 3.

2,200 killed yearly at sea

Some 2,200 seafarers are killed at sea every year, most from poverty-stricken countries with no effective maritime unions or safety legislation. Nearly 20,000 ships sail under "Flags of Convenience," operating without any rules providing even basic safety and humanitarian protection for crews.

Absenteeism illegal?

A federal judge ordered a union representing printers to not interrupt production of the *New York Post* Nov. 16 after a large number of press operators failed to show up for work.

The newspaper accused the New York Newspaper Printing Pressman's Union No. 2 of violating its collective bargaining agreement, which requires that there be uninterrupted production and publication of the newspaper.

The paper says several press operators missed work Nov. 15, limiting distribution of the *Post* to 100,000 copies, or about 20 percent of its usual circulation.

Newspaper workers give Wall Street hot stock tips

Dozens of illegally locked-out and fired workers from media conglomerates Gannett and Knight-Ridder demonstrated Dec. 10 outside a PaineWebber conference on the media industry. PaineWebber hosts the annual conference so stock analysts can assess the stock potential of media companies.

Workers from the Gannett and Knight-Ridder owned newspapers in Detroit reminded attendees that profit claims by the two media giants do not take into account the escalating legal costs that continue to mount as the two companies appeal NLRB orders to reinstate hundreds of locked-out workers with back pay. Back pay liability alone could run into the tens of millions of dollars.

Locked-out workers continue picketing and demonstrating outside the two papers' printing plants and offices. When the *Detroit News* went to the University of Michigan to interview students for internships, students joined newspaper workers in storming the interviews, clearing the room of scab papers, and showing the scabs the door.

Jubilee workers on strike

More than 700 construction workers are on strike against unsafe conditions and victimization of union activists. Most are electricians, members of the moribund Amalgamated Engineering and Electricians Union, employed on the construction of a new underground railway, the Jubilee Line, linking the planned Millenium Dome to the rest of London.

Workers walked out at the London Bridge Station in November after learning that fire alarms were inoperable. The contractor responded by sacking the AEEU safety rep and 11 other "too vocal" workers. After a series of mass meetings, electricians at London Bridge, Waterloo and Westminster sites went on strike.

Workers have stayed out despite the action being repudiated by AEEU officials. In addition to 650 striking electricians, 75 plumbers have also joined the action.

The contractor (Drake & Scull, under supervision of Bechtel) has refused to negotiate with workers, insisting that it will accept only an unconditional surrender.

When large numbers of electricians came onto the job in 1996, they quickly elected a shop steward and set up a rank-and-file hardship fund financed by an assessment of £2 a week. (The AEEU contract does not provide for sick pay, so workers decided they needed to make their own arrangements.) In addition to financing sick leave, the hardship fund has enabled rank-and-filers to maintain an active on-the-job presence and to support other workers' struggles in the area.

When Drake & Scull sacked 200 electricians in April 1997 during an illegal walk-out (protesting the sacking of the workers' elected Shop Stewards Committee), vigorous picketing won full reinstatement.

Since then their rank-and-file body has had a number of defensive disputes and been very successful, to the point of radically improving safety and general working conditions.

But last summer the contractors began getting quite heavy-handed, harassing workers over a series of minor issues in an effort to break their spirit. When workers fought back, the present dispute was the result.

The Jubilee strikers have picket lines at the Waterloo, London Bridge and Westminster tube stations every morning, and can be contacted at 249 Thorold Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 4HE.

Boss jailed for killing worker

The owner of an Indiana steel construction firm has been sentenced to four months in prison for willful violations of the Occupational Safety and Health Act that resulted in a worker's death. Roy G. Stoops pleaded guilty in U.S. District Court to willful violations of OSHA fall protection and training standards after a worker fell to his death earlier this year at a warehouse construction project in Jonestown, Penn.

43 Million U.S. Workers Lack Health Insurance

At last count in 1997, more than 43 million Americans lacked health insurance of any type – up from 31.8 million a decade earlier. From 1979 to 1997, the share of private sector workers with health insurance from their jobs fell from 71.9 percent to 64.5 percent. The bottom line: Employers are continuing to provide insurance for their long-term employees. At the same time, however, they are cutting back on coverage for their short-term and part-time employees – workers who make up a sizable, and growing, part of the U.S. labor force.

School of the Americas protest

Thousands of protestors converged on Fort Benning, Georgia, Nov. 22 to demand the closure of the U.S. Army School of the Americas. School of the Americas opponents have called for its closure since 1989, when graduates were linked to the murder of six Jesuit priests in El Salvador, among other acts of repression including union-busting and torture. Since then, opponents have gathered at Fort Benning's main gate each November in protest.

Among the thousands this year were IWW members from Atlanta, Gainesville and Detroit who had also come in solidarity with recently sentenced IWW prisoner Bill Bichsel. Fellow Worker Bichsel was sentenced to over a year in prison for engaging in civil disobedience at the SOA in 1997.

More than 2,370 people defied police orders and marched onto Fort Benning in a civil disobedience/funeral procession to honor the victims of SOA graduates. Meanwhile, an estimated 7,000 protestors crowded the Columbus, Georgia, side of Fort Benning's main gate before marchers filed in four abreast for a quarter-mile march onto post. The marchers nearly quadrupled the record set last year, when 601 were themselves arrested for marching onto post.

As the names of the thousands of innocent people assassinated, murdered or tortured to death were read Latin-mass style by Father Roy Bourgeois, the crowd solemnly answered "Presente!" The Lakota Nation drummed out the cadence and backed up the seemingly endless procession with a giant upside-down American flag.

To the surprise of everyone, Maj. Gen. Ernst, Fort Benning's commander, decided not to arrest any of the protestors this time. It was observed by some Wobblies that it would have taken at least 24 hours to process everyone, as it took six hours for 600 in 1997. So instead, police loaded the marchers onto waiting buses and dropped them off at Rigdon Park, about a mile away from the protest site on Fort Benning Road. The marchers were issued letters barring them from post until midnight Sunday, but authorities did not record the marchers' names.

Needless to say, a few unidentified IWW members crossed the line.

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Latin American unions...

continued from page 7

The financial crisis which broke out in July 1997 in Thailand is another factor that has worked against unions.

Unemployment, which stood at 4.8 percent of Brazil's labor force in December 1997, climbed to 8 percent in June. And although it dropped slightly to 7.5 percent in October, observers fear it will soar to 12 or 13 percent by April.

In Chile, one of the countries in the area with the lowest levels of unemployment, official figures put the rate at 6.8 percent in October. The University of Chile, however, estimates unemployment at 10 percent, and warns that the informal sector is expanding.

Argentina and Uruguay, nations with traditionally high levels of unemployment, have seen a slight drop in joblessness. But a surge in unemployment is one of the threats implicit in the domino effect that would come from a recession in Brazil.

Argentina's unemployment rate, which stood at 13.7 percent in October 1997, had fallen to 12.5 percent by October this year - but at the cost of a boom in the number of self-employed and informal sector (black market) workers, who account for fully half of the workforce of 15 million.

In Bolivia, the official unemployment rate stands at 16 percent – but unofficial estimates put it closer to 35 percent.

According to the president of Brazil's CUT, only 32 percent of Mercosur workers hold full-time formal sector jobs, while 53% are under-employed (including those active in the informal sector) and 14% are jobless.

That means around 58 million workers either out of a job or involved in unstable work, without rights or guarantees – with women bearing the brunt of the burden.

Trade within Mercosur rose fivefold to $20.2 billion from 1990 to 1997. But trade with the rest of the world went from a $17.3 billion surplus to a $16.7 billion deficit – which meant many exported jobs.

InterPress Third World News Agency

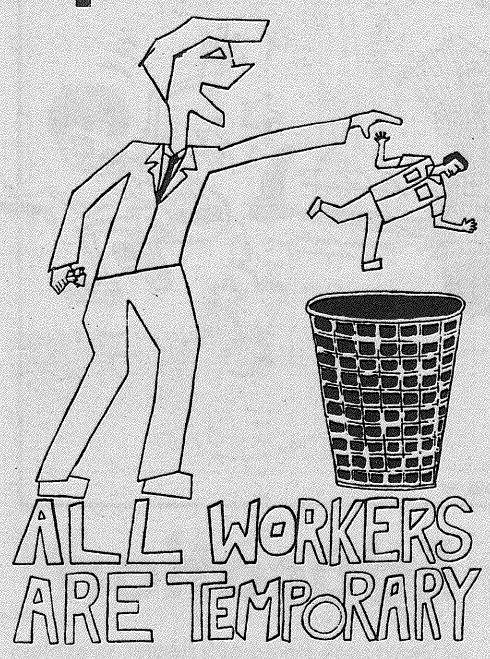
Actions target temp agencies in Spain

In 1994, the Spanish government modified the law governing employment agencies. Previously, all employers seeking workers went through the state-run agency because the law required that contracts be directly between worker and employer. Since 1994, many empresas de trabajo temporal, literally Temporary Work Businesses, have been established, although they are on a dubious legal footing as the 1994 law is unclear. Certainly our sister union, the CNT, regards them as acting illegally.

The CNT have been fighting these ETTs because they are a further attempt to attack workers' pay and conditions. Workers hired through ETTs are usually paid less than the national agreements for those industries dictate, and they have fewer employment rights. There is also the possibility of blacklisting as the ETTs promise employers "secure people."

The main reformist unions (the socialist UGT and communist CC.OO) not only show no interest in fighting the ETTs, they have signed a national agreement allowing a pay differential of up to 30% between directly employed workers and those employed via the ETT. With such an agreement it is no wonder that ETTs are being used for permanent as well as temporary jobs.

The CNT's strategy is the opposite. They try to create as many difficulties for the ETT as they can. They have stickered and occupied ETT offices. Where they have any strength in a workplace, they fight against the firm using the ETT and in favor of direct employment. The CNT has also managed to establish one union section in an ETT.



An ETT in Madrid was firebombed in early 1998, which the press tried to pin on the CNT. In June the ETT Agora in Manlleu reported a CNT militant to the police for allegedly painting their building. The ETT didn't show up in court and the CNT are responding by raising the profile of their campaign and creating a public debate on the ETTs' harmful role in the workplace.

The CNT in Burgos organised a bit of street theatre to commemorate their local ETTs, calling an ironic Via Crucis (a religious penitential procession) as the "penitent workers."

from *Direct Action*

Zimbabwe general strikes

Most of Zimbabwe's factories and businesses closed Nov. 18 when workers heeded calls for a second one-day strike to protest the government's economic policies.

The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions called the second in a series of weekly one-day strikes after talks with the government broke down. The congress is demanding lower prices and increased wages. "It's very quiet out here, even quieter than last week,'' Alphious Kamhuka, a resident of western Harare.

"The strike has had overwhelming support," said ZCTU Secretary Morgan Tsvangirai. "We want to show this arrogant government they cannot continue to ignore our demands.''

Swaziland unionist held

Jan Sithole, General Secretary of the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions was arrested Nov. 18. Swaziland, an absolute monarchy, is governed under the terms of a 25-year-old State of Emergency.

As the organizer of several demonstrations and other forms of action demanding the restoration of democracy, the SFTU has long been a target of the regime. Its leaders have been imprisoned on several occasions and some, including Sithole, have been the subjects of assassination attempts.

NUMSA pledges solidarity

The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa has threatened countrywide demonstrations if the South Korean government fails to release detained unionists and allow free union activity.

NUMSA called for the immediate release of more than 488 Korean Confederation of Trade Unions leaders who have been held since May.

NUMSA said it was painful to see other people suffering worse repression than had been inflicted by South Africa's apartheid regime. "We condemn the shabby treatment meted out against the trade unions by the Kim Dae-Jung regime, in cahoots with the multinational companies, especially Daewoo Motor Corporation."

Eiffel Tower strike won

The 200 workers at Paris' Eiffel Tower struck Oct. 30, demanding the hiring of more workers. Management conceded after a week; the strike was turning away 8,000 visitors a day, at a loss of $55,000 a day.

Meanwhile, workers at France's National Library had been walking picket lines since Oct. 20, fed up with glitches in an automated book-delivery system. Library management finally agreed to close the library on Monday mornings to catch up with the work.

Salvadoran phone workers fired

On October 31, beneath the cover of the torrential downpour of tropical storm "Mitch," CTE/ANTEL (the telephone company) fired 61 labor activists without just cause. While no reason was given for the firings, the workers were active in a new union, SUTTEL. CTE is systematically eliminating all workers who have supported attempts to form a union, in keeping with their strategy of keeping the newly privatized company union-free.

However, In the week following the firings a different, company-dominated union was recognized by the Labor Ministry. For more than a year, SUTTEL has been attempting to win union recognition, with the Ministry of Labor rejecting their applications on spurious legal grounds.

Please Fax Dominique Saint-Jean, President-Director of CTE/ANTEL (+503-281-0017) to demand the re-hiring of all workers fired on Oct. 31 and recognition of SUTTEL.

Vietnam exports workers

The Vietnamese government announced a new plan to export up to one million workers overseas in a bid to boost the country's flagging economy and to stave off social unrest produced by rising levels of unemployment and poverty.

A directive issued by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam sets out new policies aimed at dramatically increasing the exploitation of Vietnamese workers as a form of cheap labour. The government plans to operate businesses like private labour agents in countries such as the Philippines – recruiting workers from Vietnam's state-owned enterprises and contracting them out to overseas companies.

The directive boasts of Vietnam's "work force that is highly educated with 90 percent literacy and the lowest wages, from $180 per month to $25 per month, and a tradition for learning and respect for authority."

Crushing work loads

A Gallup poll has found that 87 percent of Finns believe that difficulties in coping with workloads, and even burn out, constitute a major problem at work. Only 28 percent think productivity could be increased even further in order to be more competitive in the international marketplace.

Union members reported being especially harried, with 91 percent of SAK (Central Organization of Finnish Unions) members complaining of overwork. Two-thirds of Finns said it was unfair that increased productivity and profits benefit company executives rather than workers.

New York International Labor Film & Video Fest

January 15 - 16, at 99 Hudson St, New York.
info: www.laboronline.org 212/966-4014
email info@laboronline.org

Workshops on how labor can use the Internet for solidarity and education and use community access video to get their message out.Friday night will feature films on the Korean General Strike, the Rio Tinto (Australia) miner's struggle, the Liverpool struggle, and Japanese railway workers.

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Working in Education

Snooping on children

ZapMe! Corp. secretly snoops on schoolchildren as they browse the Internet using ZapMe! computers, and then sends the information to advertisers and marketers, according to the Associated Press (AP). "This is borderline child abuse," said Ralph Nader. "We want to warn parents about leaving their children in the care and custody of a corporate predator."

ZapMe! monitors students' Web browsing, breaking the data down by age, sex and ZIP code. It sells this information to advertisers and marketers, who use it to target students in school with laser-like precision.

ZapMe! expects to expand to 100 schools by the end of 1998. It places computers in schools which broadcast advertisements to schoolchildren.

TAs demand cutback fight

The Graduate Student Employees Union GSEU has challenged the State University of New York Board of Trustees to explain why they are cooperating with downsizing, rather than fighting cuts in state funding.

Some 1,600 professorships have been eliminated in the past four years, with much of the workload shifted to underpaid Teaching Assistants and Graduate Assistants.

The GSEU is also asking why the Board is packed with corporate executives, rather than educators, alumni and others with a stake in the health of the university system.

Discrimination vs. gay domestic partners barred

The Oregon Court of Appeals has ruled that Oregon Health Sciences University violated the state constitution when it denied insurance coverage to domestic partners which was made available to spouses of heterosexual workers. (Oregon Ct App 12/09/98)

The state constitution provides: "No law shall be passed granting to any citizen or class of citizens privileges or immunities, which, upon the same terms, shall not equally belong to all citizens." While the university claimed any discrimination was unintentional, the court held that even unintended discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation was unconstitutional.

Fighting for a living wage

Activists at Kent State University (Ohio) have launched a Living Wage Campaign to challenge a system where the number of education workers living in dire poverty if exploding. While administrator Carol Cartwright received a raise of $34,000, other KSU workers are close to the minimum wage with few benefits, minimal raises and no voice regarding working conditions.

"People working in all jobs necessary to the functioning of the university should have salaries sufficient to live comfortably. All employees should have a voice in how the university operates and they deserve dignity and respect. These are not outrageous ideas. What is outrageous is the huge income disparity which has been created and continues to widen."

Machinists quit IAM

Machinists at Northwest Airlines have voted to leave the International Association of Machinists, and join the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association.

AMFA campaigned on the plank that aircraft mechanics have lost their leverage by joining with other airline workers (such as baggage handlers and customer service agents) also represented by the IAM. AMFA also represents mechanics at Alaska Airlines.

The decertification of the IAM followed members' rejection of a tentative contract in August. The IAM continues to represent clerical workers, customer service agents and security personnel at Northwest.

UC TAs...

continued from page 1

timer was set up in front of the Chancellor's office. (The reference is to a now-defunct TA manual which instructed TAs to use an egg timer to limit the time they spend grading each paper to six minutes to keep to the 20 hours they are paid for each week, obviously seriously compromising the quality of education). We sang songs in a very echo-y atrium in front of the chancellor's office, and presented the chancellor with a narrative evaluation (the primary method of "grading" at UCSC, which indicated that she had failed "Intro. to Collective Bargaining 101."

Five campus cooperatives also offered support. Workers at Pedalers' Express (who recently organized into the IWW) were particularly active. The co-ops donated food and coffee (delivered by bike messenger) to the picket lines. The Student Junxion Pizza Coop affixed flyers to all pizza boxes expressing support for the TAs, which drew attention in the *San Francisco Chronicle.*

At least 18 U.S. universities have recognized TA unions, including the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, and Wayne State University in Detroit.

The struggle over union recognition at U Cal goes back to 1983 (an earlier unionization wave was defeated in the 1970s), when the tutors and "readers," assistants who grade papers but do not teach, formed a union at the Berkeley campus and won recognition after a lengthy court battle insisting that they were workers. In 1995, U Cal TAs won a ruling from the California Public Employment Relations Board ordering the university to negotiate with the union. The university appealed, claiming that unionization would infringe upon its mentoring relationship with its graduate students.

Weevils at work

Weevils at Work: What's happening to work in Australia – an oral record, by Wendy Lowenstein (Catalyst Press, 1997).

Wendy Lowenstein's *Weevils at Work* should be compulsory reading for all politicians; they might actually realise that Australians are not going to take their bullshit much longer. This contemporary oral history follows Lowenstein's previous oral history work on the 1930s Depression (*Weevils in the Flour*) and the Waterside Workers (*Under the Hook*). After ten years of work interviewing 200 people, Lowenstein was unable to find a publisher for *Weevils at Work* and it's not hard to figure out why. This is no fictional account of hard times which can be fobbed off as 'grunge' fiction. Instead, the 'battlers' that John Howard spends so much time talking about tell their own stories about their experiences in the workforce, their adjustment to retirement and unemployment and offer their opinions on the nature of Australian society at the end of the twentieth century.

Instead of the patronising right-wing wankery of the radio shock-jocks such as Bob Francis and John Laws, who seek merely to sell an audience to advertisers, *Weevils* allows ordinary people to have a say. There are heart-wrenching tales of much effort for little reward, stirring stories of community, union and political struggles, the racism and exploitation faced by migrants, and disturbing anecdotes about the nature of the struggle of workers against bureaucracy, arrogant union leaders, bosses and government. These are tales from the front-line of the class war and when you read a book like *Weevils,* you don't for one minute hesitate in calling it a class war.

The breadth of people interviewed means a wide range of subjects are dealt with, from lots of different angles. There are legal-aid lawyers, furniture removalists, clothing workers with RSI, rank-and-file union activists, women working in the construction industry, retirees and artists. A lot of the people interviewed have had to change their lives after being left for dead by the capitalist system but they have survived and found new and more enjoyable ways to exist. Many of the interviews give real insight into the way Australia is run by the bureaucratic and capitalist elites. A couple of Social Security workers tell how the social security bureaucracy is more interested in keeping their jobs than solving unemployment problems, schemes are renamed as different governments come and go, but nothing is done about unemployment and poverty. Those who have been or are unemployed talk about organising the unemployed and how the social security system is used to wield power over welfare

Book Reviews

recipients instead of helping them. Many of the interviewees talk about the stupidity and arrogance of managers and bosses, who would rather exert control than actually produce something efficiently.

For anarchists and other radicals, particularly students who might see themselves as a potential vanguard to lead the revolution, *Weevils* shows that the working class is no t the bigoted and thick bunch as the media so often tell us. Although Hanson may be appealing to the disaffected, there is a real sense in *Weevils* of many people who are mightily fucked off with the system who are isolated, do not place any faith in parliament, the state or capitalism but are unsure about what to do. While Lowenstein might have decided to edit out racist comments, you struggle to find racism in the pages of *Weevils at Work.* There is hope. While some are involved in various community and other struggles, others are more than likely to spend lifetimes scared to voice their real thoughts or unable to involve themselves in Do-It-Yourself or liberating politics. In Australia and around the world, its people like these who we should reach out to, even if they don't want to join an anarchist group.

I found *Weevils* a fantastic read, both interesting and informative, as should be the case with the best oral history. Lowenstein knows how to bring people out of their shells and touches on subjects that are frightening the shit out of governments and bosses today. Instead of towing the corporate line, Lowenstein went out and published the book herself, an example of how their are ways to do things without them being on capitalist

Joe Hill Commemorated in St. Louis

The St. Louis Wobbly commemoration of Joe Hill mixed memories of past working-class struggle with modern challenges facing the labor movement. The concert began with a speech by St. Louis Wob Ed Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald, a retired union organizer, outlined the frame-up, pointing out that the tactics used against Hill were common in anti-union states like Utah at the turn of the century. He also reminded listeners that some of Joe Hill's ashes were scattered in St. Louis by local Wobs.

After the opening speech, IWW member Bob Rise introduced a series of speakers who talked about the danger of privatization of the Social Security and Medicare programs. Lynn Moratiz, a professor at the St. Louis University medical school, noted that the HMOs that now control only a small part of the Medicare program are taking 24 cents of every dollar Medicare spends on its recipients. These greedy HMOs want to control the entire program!

St. Louis singer Carl Kichtenbaum offered a rousing tribute to Joe Hill and labor struggles, accompanying his singing with guitar and banjo picking. Members of the St. Louis writers group then read poems and prose pieces connecting early labor struggles to the current struggle against privatization of Social Security and Medicare.

Mike O'Neill, a Registered Nurse and union organizer, spoke on organizing health care workers, noting that HMOs, managed care and creeping privatization have undermined the quality of health care in area hospitals. Hospital bosses are using every dirty trick in the book to frustrate organizing efforts, with workers who complain about under-staffing being threatened with firing. When maintenance workers were on the verge of a union election, managers threatened to contract out their work if the union was voted in.

Jim House of the St. Louis Mental Health Association pointed out that "reform" and privatization have seen mentally and physically disabled workers being denied SSI benefits left and right.

Progressive St. Louis musician Tim Katzmier then took the stage, heralding the recent arrest of Chilean butcher and CIA puppet Augusto Pinochet. With dulcimer and guitar, Katzmier then performed a set of Chilean songs about struggle and justice.

The program ended with remarks from FW Rice on the importance of protecting Social Security not only to recipients, but to the entire population. He called on workers to remember past leaders like Joe Hill, William Wallace and the Haymarket Martyrs who died for freedom and class self-defense. Joe Hill, after all, is with us still everywhere we organize to fight the bosses. He lives with workers in the modern struggles against privatization.

terms. *Weevils* releases the considerable anger that many Australians are feeling, having been sold down the river by the various power elites. The picture of working class Australians is one of fright and bravery; thought and action; philosophy and indignation, telling me what I always known as I have grown up, that my friends and their families were not the sheep, the idiots that so many of the elite patronise so well. For a damn good eye-opening and inspiring read, find a copy of *Weevils at Work.*

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Corporate Hyenas

Corporate Hyenas at Work, by Susan Marais and Magriet Herman. Pretoria, South Africa: Kagiso Publishers, 165 pp., $15 (suma@global.co.za)

The most appealing thing about this rather odd book – written by two consultants after they were retrenched from their jobs – is the title. However, it quickly becomes clear that this is not a book about corporations, but rather about office politics and managerial style; and that the solutions on offer are not collective organization to rid ourselves of jackal corporations, but rather individual empowerment strategies. (The authors do call for "universal trade unionism" committed to the survival of the "Corporate Ecosystem" as well as that of union members. No class-conscious worker will relish this prospect.)

The authors would have us believe that we are victimized because of psychological traits (ours, and those of our tormenters), and offer strategies for recognizing and surviving unhealthy organizations, and mustering one's personal resources in the event of retrenchment. Much of the advice is psycho-babble and consultant-speak – the sort of gibberish I have heard from countless useless parasites who specialize in saying nothing concrete in as many words as possible, drawing a healthy salary from the bosses for wasting everyone's time.

The book does offer an intriguing, if sometimes maddeningly vague, glimpse of a very different system of industrial relations. Many U.S. workers might find intriguing the notion – taken for granted in this book – that industrial tribunals exist to which workers can appeal unfair dismissals, along with the many other legal rights apparently on the books in South Africa. But capitalism remains a vicious, inhumane system of abuse and exploitation of workers.

Perhaps some people traumatized by losing their job or transfixed by the bloody office politics that dominate much of middle management might find the "hyena" metaphor useful in regaining their equilibrium. But most workers – even the white-collar workers and professionals at whom it seems to be aimed – would do better to consult an organizing handbook, and build a fighting union to defend their interests. [JB]

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T-SHIRTS

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IWW Globe Black on Red, L or XL. $14 + $3 s/h. P&L Printing, 2298 Clay Dr., Denver CO 80211.

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Collective Bargaining Manual $2.50. New York GMB, RD 1 Box 158-B, Hartwick NY 13348

Introduction to the U.S.: An Autonomist Political History by Noel Ignatiev. $7. P & L Printing, 2298 Clay St., Denver CO 80211

British Isles – Songbook (36th Edition) £4 post-paid; a selection of IWW literature is available from 75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1 1WB.

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Organizing in the Restaurant Industry

The restaurant industry is earmarked by characteristics that are not conducive to "official" unionism. Many of the business unions are not interested in organizing restaurant workers. Our meager salaries are not much of a boost to the union treasury. In addition, worker transience is one of the single biggest obstacles in place of building the solidarity needed to form a union on the job. Restaurant jobs come a dime a dozen.

Many times a worker catching the short end of the stick will quit in frustration. Unfortunately, the next restaurant job the stiff comes across will be haunted with similar, if not identical, grievances. Business turnover is another obstacle. It's hard to organize your workplace if it goes belly-up. With all these things seemingly in the way of forming a union, or at least a union presence, at a restaurant job even the most fire-brand Wob could get easily discouraged.

So what is there left for the stouthearted restaurant employee not ready to walk off to the next job but not willing to take the boss' crap? The answer lies in acting union on the job.

In a coffee shop that myself and one other Wob worked in the grievances piled up like the dirty dishes at lunch time. Low pay, broken promises of raises, and poor treatment all came to a head one day as we received our modest paychecks. As my fellow employees all stood about fuming and cursing in the kitchen I suggested we meet off the clock to discuss what was going on.

The entire staff, save for those who were at work, met later that evening. We talked about our problems on the job and mapped out a plan of action. One worker was elected to go to the bosses and lay out our demands. As a result the promised raises were given as well as other workers receiving wage increases shortly thereafter. A message was also sent to our bosses that we were not going to take the shabby treatment they so hardily dished out.

This action, although a small one, was a great boost of confidence for us all. With only about 12 percent of the U.S. working class being organized, workers overall, especially those in the service industry, are not familiar with the idea of collective action any more. This was a good starting point that had the potential to lay the groundwork for a union presence on the job.

With the idea implanted to act union on the job the next step is to dig into the restaurant workers' bag of resources and see what tools can be brought out to force a stubborn boss to concede to the demands of the workers.

One vital thing to recognize, and to try and make your fellow workers recognize, is that from the kitchen to the dining room, the workers are in total control of the service. It is through our labor that the eggs are cooked, the dishes are kept clean, and the customer is served in a timely fashion.

Had the boss from the above story not agreed to meet our demands there are a whole host of tactics that we could have used to get what we wanted. Consider this passage from Sam Dolgoff's *Fragments:* "The direct action tactics of the IWW (were often clever and even amusing)... IWW strikers got quick results organizing the staff from the inside. Wobblies whom the employer did not know, hired out as 'strikebreakers.' No sooner did the 'strikebreakers' begin to serve lunch than strange 'accidents' began to happen: a waiter 'accidentally' spilled a bowl of soup on a tablecloth, hamburgers were 'mistakenly' fried in fish oil, coffee was flavored with soap suds, sugar dispensers were packed with salt, full meals were marked on the tab as coffee and cake, etc. The 'strikebreakers' were fired immediately after lunch and the victorious strikers returned."

While the action described above was a strike situation the tactics, and ones like them, could be used in a similar way to force demands on the boss. In New York City, IWW restaurant workers, after losing a strike, won some of their demands when they taking the advice of IWW organizers to "pile up the plates, give em double helpings, and figure the checks on the low side."

The backbone principles of the IWW – acting union (solidarity) and the workers taking matters into their own hands (direct action) – are the two strongest weapons in combating the characteristics of restaurant work that hamper "official" unionism. Remember, even a lone Wobbly in the kitchen can make a difference.

All information pertaining to the struggle within the restaurant and hotel service industry should be sent to davecoker@usa.net or posted at iu640@iww.org. Take care and slow down – fast workers die young!

— Dave Coker



Finland McDonald's workers organize

McDonald's and its franchisees have 4,000 employees in Finland. Recently union activists achieved a historic breakthrough, winning the right to recognize 1,500 workers at the 30 McDonald's-owned restaurants.

The Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union is fighting to regularize work hours, replacing random work schedules with predictable hours which ensure workers sufficient paid hours to meet their needs.

McStrike Vote

Workers in Squamish, B.C., the only unionized McDonald's workers in North America, have voted in favour of strike action. Members of the Canadian Auto Workers voted 61 percent in favor of job action.

CAW local president Denise Kellehan said the union has been in negotiations for more than a month and wants to speed up the pace of talks for a first contract. "We've had 12 bargaining sessions and we feel we need to start moving things along a little more quickly, and therefore we've taken a strike vote," she said. "We need them to address key issues." The main issues are scheduling by seniority and wages.

Rail Unions To Merge

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and the United Transportation Union, the two dominant rail unions in North America, have announced plans to merge. The new union would include engineers, conductors, trainmen, brakemen and switchmen.

Wobble Is A Verb

The essential value of union lies in what it can do. What it can do for you and yours and for your class as a whole. What you can do with it. How you can use it to do what you need to do. To do is a verb. Action is what we're talking about.

When we come together on the job to address our common problems with the shared strength of our common action, we are doing something. We're not talking about it, though that's important, and we're not reading or thinking about it. We are acting on it. Doing. We are the subjects, to put it in grammatical terms, and the problem is our object, upon which we, in common activity, act to change. That's action. Verb.

In the construction trades the verb "to wobble" is commonly used to describe a group action that seeks to address and fix a problem on the job, a problem with the boss, as on-the-job problems tend to be. To wobble the job is to walk out, slow down, all go to the boss for a confab on work time, to come together to address the problem by direct means. That's what it's all about.

It's happening all the time, all over the place. It's a necessary part of daily life on the job. You can do it too. You and your fellow workers, on your job, can wobble the situation to make it better. That's job control, and that's the thing we need to establish and protect, for our own safety and health, to ensure good compensation for our precious time, for fun and profit and relief from the boredom and loneliness that pervades our lives in this modern workaday world.

The key to good wobbling is union. That's small u union, meaning cooperation and concerted effort amongst fellows, people with the same needs and circumstance, i.e: the people you work next to day after day. Alone we are weak and ineffectual. Together we are awesome in our power. We have only to organize this power and to wield it, for our common good, to make this world a better place. Together we can win. We just have to do (verb) it. Let's act now.

Think it over – Join the I.W.W.

Help the work along

William D. Haywood, aka Big Bill, used to sign his letters and correspondences "Help the work along, Wm. D. Haywood." He was a founding organizer and the General Secretary-Treasurer of the IWW for many years, through our most turbulent times, and a great leader. That closing formula tells you a lot about his method of leadership, and the union of the time.

Help the work along. We joined together, then and now, to do a job of work, to accomplish a task, for ourselves and each other, for our class and for generations to come. That task, simply stated in the Preamble, is the Abolition of the Wage System. Building a new society within the shell of the old. Ending, once and for all, the tyranny of money, of boss over worker.

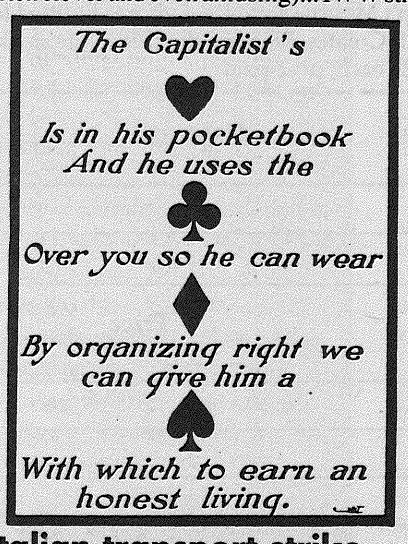
It's a big job. Too big by far to be accomplished by any one hero or small band of heroes, no matter how mighty. Help the work along. It's a big job that takes however long it takes, however many battles and however many hours of volunteer labor and thought. However many tasks, small or large. Hours of travel, putting the paper out on time issue after issue, year after year. However many meetings and discussions, ballots printed and mailed and counted, dues stamps sold and licked and stuck in however many little red books, monies counted and accounted for.

Not all that sexy, most of it. Business-like and plodding often. Hard work lightened by many hands, shared hours, little steps. Sometimes just holding the line against setbacks. Sometimes not even that. Some leaps and bounds.

"Every member an organizer." "We are all leaders." "If each wobbly would make a new wobbly once a week we'd have the Cooperative Commonwealth in a few short years." "Help the work along."

The work: Education, Organization, Emancipation. Those are the names of the three stars in the IWW emblem on every dues book and button. Education, both of self and fellow workers. Organization, both of self and fellow workers. Emancipation of a class in struggle, at war, and of the earth that feeds and holds us all.

Won't you join us in our work? Help the work along. What else is there to do?



Italian transport strike

Airport ground workers held a series of short 4-hour strikes in mid-November. Workers are protesting failed contract talks and intolerable conditions at the revamped Milan airport. They were joined by striking taxi and train workers.

Be a Wobbly – Join the IWW...

Real Democracy! All policy decisions are made by referendum. The IWW has just one (modestly) paid officer, the General Secretary-Treasurer. The 7-member General Executive Board is elected annually by the entire membership. All officers may be recalled by referendum. IWW workplaces and branches make their own decisions about bargaining and strategy.

To Join mail this form with a check or money order for initiation and first month's dues to IWW, 103 West Michigan Ave., Ypsilanti MI 48197, or contact your local delegate. **Dues:** Monthly income under $1,000: $6 per month; Income $1,000-2,000: $12 monthly; Over $2,000: Dues $18. Initiation Fee is same as one month's dues. A low-income worker can join for as little as $12.00

__ I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.
__ I agree to abide by the IWW constitution and regulations.
__ I will study its principles and make myself acquainted with its purposes.

Name: _____ Occupation: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State/Prov.: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Membership includes a subscription to the Industrial Worker